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Letters

"Gay Is Good for Us All"

Having enjoyed countless hours of informative, entertaining reading as one of your charter subscribers, I hope you will suffer me one complaint—it's that article "Gay Is Good for Us All" by Suzannah Lessard [December].

I don't object to the topic, having read any number of similar articles elsewhere, but to its total inappropriateness in *The Washington Monthly*. It fails utterly to keep faith with your stated purpose of exploring what's wrong with government and what can be done to set it right. That's a magnificent purpose and I think you ought to stick to it.

Stay unique. Gay may be good for the rest of us, but not for *The Washington Monthly*.

ROBERT LONGOOD
Albany, New York

The editor replies:

In the midst of articles about agencies and programs, "Gay Is Good for Us All" might appear to be out of place. Yet it seems to us close to the source of what is wrong with our government—which is what is wrong with ourselves, with the values of society as a whole. The American ritual of manhood challenged in "Gay is Good," and in an earlier article, "Violence and the Masculine Mystique" (July, 1970), has a lot to do with why we can't face losing or making mistakes, why we have spent 10 years in Vietnam. Challenging values like the masculine mystique or the work-security trap that keeps people from speaking out ("Breaking Out of the Work Prison," February) is an important part of challenging government. It has been, and will continue to be, one of the main purposes of *The Washington Monthly*.

"What's Good for GM"

I feel Phil Moore's piece on General Motors ["What's Good for the Country, Is Good for GM" December] is outstandingly the best reporting on the subject, which is, of course, not very surprising, since Phil is such a bright man and Campaign GM was his baby.

BETTY FURNESS
New York, N.Y.

Miss Furness is chairman and executive director of the New York State Consumer Protection Board.

There are a few factual errors in Philip Moore's "What's Good for the Country, Is Good for GM" [December].

1) Moore says, "It [GM] has $8 billion of cash surplus on deposit in some 380 banks around the world." I thought maybe he was incorrectly using the net worth figure of General Motors, but I find common stockholders' equity at the end of 1969 was about $10 billion. Parent company cash was about $340 million and cash of GMAC was $213 million. There are a couple of smaller unconsolidated subsidiaries, such as Motors Insurance Corp., but the cash holdings of such firms would be relatively small. The cash holdings of GMAC, to a large extent, are required as compensating balances on bank loans and, in effect, are standby fees paid for credit availability. There is no question that General Motors has enormous muscle with the banks (I don't think there is a major bank in the country that would let their Trust Department independently vote for a "Campaign GM" proposal because of either the presence or potential of significant deposits) and I wouldn't be surprised if the 380 bank figure is quite correct, but the $8 billion figure has to be way off.

2) The cumulative profit of General Motors for 1947 to 1969 was given as $82 billion. I come up with a figure from Moody's of about $25 billion after tax and, whereas I haven't totaled the pre-tax figure, it must be in the area of about $50 billion.

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Sterling Tucker. For 13 years Executive Director of the Washington, D.C. Urban League; Director of Field Services for the League's "New Thrust" program; national coordinator for the Solidarity Day March; vice-chairman and organizer of the 1963 March on Washington; author of **Black Reflections on White Power,** also by Eerdmans.

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However, the after-tax figure would be the proper one to use when the term "cumulative profit" is used and also when the figure is modified by a description "yielding a return of considerably more than 20 per cent on investment." Actually, I think the 20 per cent figure is accurate as after-tax return on shareholders' investment, although I haven't made the exact calculation.

Mr. Moore is making a real mistake in using figures such as these, since they leap out at a business-oriented reader as patently incorrect—even if he doesn't know precisely what the correct figures are. (For example, most investors know that General Motors has never earned much over $2 billion, so when $82 billion is given as the cumulative profit for 23 years, he knows something is wrong.) Such errors have to detract from his argument—even if for irrelevant reasons.

WARREN E. BUFFETT
Omaha, Nebraska

The author, Philip Moore, director of Campaign GM, replies:

As a general matter let me say that Mr. Buffett's criticisms are proper and accurate. They reflect, I think, our lack of resources and particularly our inability to have a business economist on our staff—an impossibility with a budget of $5,000 a month.

As to his specific comments, I offer more an excuse or explanation than a meritorious response.

The $8 billion figure refers to what I understand to be General Motors' current capital surplus, which I assumed to be either in cash or highly liquid form such as treasury bills, most of which would be on deposit either in cash or as nominee in the 380 banks. The 380 bank figure comes from James Roche, so I assume it is accurate. My error is the use of the word "cash" instead of "capital" surplus, which I so blithely assumed would be spread around the 380 banks.

The cumulative profit figure that I use of $82 billion is pre-tax. It was given to me by the United Auto Workers and is, I am sure, quite accurate; at least the figure is closer to $80 billion than to $50 billion. I should have checked the United Auto Workers' figures more closely and I should have used more traditional accounting practices.

Let me add in defense that none of these factual inaccuracies (if that's what they are) detracts from the immensity of General Motors' public power. But I do agree with his basic conclusion—that my general argument is weakened by even minor errors. ■

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The Interlake Affair

by Alexander Polikoff

In June, 1968, a steel worker was crossing a river on a railroad bridge on his daily walk to work. From the bridge he saw a pipe, extending from the steel plant, spewing a black discharge into the river. He telephoned the U.S. Coast Guard to report what he had seen.

So began a skirmish in the fight to save Lake Michigan, sixth largest of the world's fresh water lakes, but well on its way to the degradation of Lake Erie. What has happened in the two-and-a-half years since that phone call is the ire-raising story of how our anti-pollution agencies turn themselves off while the remaining years of Lake Michigan's life slip inexorably away.

Alexander Polikoff is Executive Director of Businessmen for the Public Interest. This is an excerpt from a forthcoming book on Lake Michigan pollution.

The steel company is Interlake, Inc. It has been around for 65 years. Its $355 million of property includes plants on the Grand Calumet River in Chicago and on the Little Calumet River in suburban Riverdale, Illinois. Stockbrokers call Interlake a "fully integrated steelmaker" and the "largest factor" in the pig-iron market. It makes steel stripping, pipe, storage rack systems, and much more. It owns 90 per cent of a Belgian producer and is a partner with French and German firms. In 1969 its sales were $325 million and its operating income over $42 million.

Interlake prides itself on being a leader in the fight against pollution. In one of his speeches on that subject Interlake's president, Reynold C. MacDonald, said it seemed "mighty important" to him that industry

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"demonstrate by deeds, as well as words and desires, a willingness to. . . take the actions necessary to meet its [pollution] obligations. Obviously," he added, "our first job must be to clear up our own company's pollution."

MacDonald described how Interlake went at the problem through a pollution control project team of specialists, and he told of one of Interlake's proudest achievements in pollution control:

> . . . a technique we developed with DuPont to neutralize waste hydrochloric acid pickle liquor. . . . This latest development completely eliminates all pollutants from waste pickle liquor.

MacDonald also talked of honesty:

> Every company must act candidly and openly, in this, and all areas. If we in industry are to generate the confidence, trust, and goodwill that we must have from our partners in this massive campaign, we have to be honest and open. Interlake's public policy is to report both good and bad news with dispatch. I wouldn't have it any other way.

Interlake, it seemed, was an anti-pollution exemplar for all of industry.

The steelworker is Frank Jacklovich, 29, who lives with his wife and three children on the Chicago side of the Little Calumet River, an eight-minute walk from Interlake's Riverdale plant. The river, an important shipping artery, flows into or out of Lake Michigan a few miles away, depending on whether the O'Brien locks, just up the river from Interlake's plant, are open or closed.

The route that Jacklovich walked to work every morning took him across the quarter-mile-wide Little Calumet River on a railroad bridge leading into Interlake's sprawling Riverdale plant. From the bridge he could see, quite plainly, a large pipe, over two feet in diameter, extending from Interlake's mill and overhanging the river. He could also see, quite plainly, the steady coal-black stream which poured from the pipe and fell to the river three feet below. And Jacklovich began to report what he saw to the Coast Guard.

Gunk Goes to Court

The Coast Guard is the first of the many government agencies involved in this story. One of the Guard's duties is to check on violations of the venerable Refuse Act, a criminal law passed in 1899. The Refuse Act was originally designed to deal with harbor and navigation matters. But with the emergence of environmental concerns, the Supreme Court interpreted the act to cover pollution problems as well. With Biblical simplicity, the Refuse Act says, in effect, Thou shalt not dump refuse in navigable waters.

The Coast Guard did check up on Jacklovich's reports. On June 3, 1968, the Guard took water samples from the pipe near the bridge (officially called Interlake Outfall No. 18) and delivered them to the Chicago District Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps, which is the principal administering agency under the Refuse Act, in turn had the samples analyzed by a private laboratory. The results were positive—or maybe negative, depending on the point of view. The samples showed that oil and mill scale (flaked steel particles produced in the steel-making process) were spewing from Outfall No. 18. The deposit of either substance in the river is a violation of the Refuse Act, so the Corps passed its information on to the U.S. Attorney in Chicago, the local official responsible for legal enforcement of the act. In December, 1968, just three months after President MacDonald's industry responsibility speech, the U.S. Attorney charged Interlake with violating the Refuse Act. The case was assigned to Chief Judge Edwin Robson of the Federal District Court in Chicago.

Interlake pleaded not guilty, and its lawyer, Henry Pitts, first vice president of the Illinois State Bar Association and a senior partner in a large and prestigious Chicago law firm, attacked the whole idea of prosecuting Inter-

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lake. Pitts said that the U.S. Attorney couldn't bring the law suit because he hadn't been asked to by the Corps. (The Refuse Act says U.S. Attorneys should "vigorously" enforce the prohibition against dumping, but Pitts argued that the U.S. Attorney could do nothing unless somebody else asked him to.)

Pitts also argued that the Refuse Act was "superseded" by a newer law (even though the newer statute expressly said it was not to "affect or impair" the Refuse Act). Finally, Pitts said the U.S. Attorney shouldn't be allowed to proceed against a defendant who was "all the while in compliance with the modern, up-to-date standards for water pollution control set by another arm of government." He was referring to standards set by an agency of the state of Illinois, the Sanitary Water Board, and his argument implied that Interlake was meeting those standards. (The fact was that Interlake was not. Indeed, the next year the Water Board would ask the Illinois Attorney General to sue Interlake for *not* meeting its standards.)

In March, 1969, Chief Judge Robson brushed Pitts' arguments aside and ordered Interlake to go on trial on May 26, 1969. Precisely on that date, with the trial ready to go on, Interlake changed its plea to *nolo contendere*, meaning it wouldn't fight the charges but neither would it plead guilty. Interlake also filed an affidavit by Frank Armour, its vice president of engineering, saying, yes, Interlake had discharged mill scale into the Little Calumet River from Outfall No. 18 on June 3, 1968, but that it was all an accident. Armour said that Interlake's system removed mill scale and oil before discharging water into the river but that a drain leading to Outfall No. 18 had broken open and the break had caused the accident. The affidavit also said that the drain problem had been corrected "by reblocking the drain with a heavy steel plate sealed into place and supported by the pouring of a concrete base and providing additional bulkheading." Armour added, "This installation has corrected the problem, as evidenced by the fact that there have been no further incidents."

The affidavit also advised the court that Interlake was in the midst of a $30 million pollution abatement program, that it was co-developer of the "pickle liquor" treatment process for handling waste acids to which President MacDonald had referred, and that Interlake was "attempting to cooperate fully with all federal, state, and local pollution control agencies." MacDonald's speech was included as an exhibit to the affidavit, along with an Izaak Walton League citation for "great progress" in water pollution abatement which called Interlake "an outstanding example of industry in action and forward motion." Also included was a letter Interlake had received from the Cook County Clean Streams Committee. The committee's letter said it had been "very disturbed" to read of the charges against Interlake since Interlake was "the Chicago area leader" in progress against pollution.

Despite all this, Judge Robson found Interlake guilty and fined it $500, the minimum permitted by the Refuse Act (the maximum is $2,500). He also ordered that Jacklovich be paid $250 because the Refuse Act says half the fine should be paid to a citizen who supplies information which leads to conviction.

A Shifty System

At this point, everybody seemed to be happy and one would have thought the system was working well. The U.S. Attorney had obtained a conviction, showing he was interested in enforcing the antipollution laws. The laws themselves had been strengthened by Judge Robson's opinion. Jacklovich had played a useful citizen's role and had received $250 for his effort. And Interlake, although convicted, had gotten off with a minimum fine. (It had also had a chance to protect its corporate image by publicly express-

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ing its concern about pollution and making the point that the incident for which it had been convicted was accidental and would not be repeated.) But that was what one would have thought.

As it turned out, everybody was not happy and the system was not working well. The mill scale and oil continued to flow from Outfall No. 18 even after the drain was blocked (notwithstanding Interlake's affidavit that the seeping had been a one-time accident). Pollution continued to flow from other Interlake outfalls too, including the one from the highly touted "pickle liquor" facility.

In his daily walks across the bridge Jacklovich saw what was happening and continued to phone the Coast Guard and Corps of Engineers. He called in June, one month after the conviction, and he called many times in July, in August, and in September.

After one such complaint, which Jacklovich made on September 3, 1969, the Corps made arrangements to use the Coast Guard's 17-foot fiberglass speedboat to take water samples from the river alongside Interlake's plant. The results of the sample proved, as usual, that Interlake was polluting the river.

Finally, more than five months later, the Corps got around to reporting the results, and on February 12, 1970, Charles W. Wyant, district counsel in Chicago, stated that the incident appeared to be a violation of the Refuse Act, and concluded: "Prosecution is recommended."

Wyant's report then went through channels: to Wyant's superior in Chicago, then to his superior in the general counsel's office of the Chief of Engineers in Washington, and then, presumably, to the Department of Justice in Washington, which should in turn have told the U.S. Attorney in Chicago to prosecute. Once again, nothing happened.

Why? It was the same kind of pollution for which Interlake had been convicted just a few months earlier (swearing it was a one-time accident—a misstatement about which apparently nobody even probed Interlake), and it came from exactly the same outfall. Nor was the September 4 incident just another accident; there were all those other Jacklovich phone calls, many of which had been investigated and confirmed by the Coast Guard and Corps. Finally, the Corps had recommended prosecution. Why, then, didn't the U.S. Attorney prosecute Interlake?

A Deferment for Refuse

The precise answer is shrouded in bureaucratic mystery, but a clue may be found in the attitude of the Justice Department in Washington. In early 1970, the Justice Department began to develop its "deference" policy: the policy of deferring in pollution matters to another federal agency, the Federal Water Quality Administration (FWQA). FWQA was set up under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (FWPCA, passed in 1948 and since amended several times) as the federal agency to develop and enforce water quality standards in cooperation with state antipollution agencies. The mechanism for doing this under the FWPC Act is called the "enforcement conference," which is a Rube Goldberg administrative nightmare in which federal and state officials are supposed to sit down together and agree on water quality standards and how to enforce them. There is an ultimate right to go to court to force polluters to adhere to the standards, but the administrative procedure which must precede court action is so time-consuming and involved that court action has hardly ever been used in the history of the FWPC Act.

The first federal-state enforcement conference with respect to Lake Michigan wasn't even convened until 1965. By that time the peril to Lake Michigan was not exactly a secret, especially with the grim reminder of Lake Erie only a few hundred miles away.

Five-and-a-half years and thou-

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sands of pages of enforcement conference proceedings later, a report was issued in November, 1970, by a technical committee of the conference. The report contained high praise for all that everybody had accomplished in the previous five-and-a-half years. Buried in the praise were two questions and answers: First, what had happened to water quality in the five-and-a-half years of enforcement conference work? Answer: In most places no better and in many places "deteriorated." Second, what would be the water quality when the conference's clean-up programs were completed? Answer: The waters would still be polluted.

This was the agency and procedure to which the Justice Department was going to "defer" in pollution matters. A concerned Congressman who got wind of the new policy, Henry Reuss of Wisconsin, immediately wrote to Attorney General John Mitchell to find out what was going on.

Gnarled in the Outfall

Reuss got his answer on June 2, 1970, in a letter from Mitchell's assistant, Shiro Kashiwa. In bureaucratese Kashiwa told Reuss that the Department was *not* going to "vigorously enforce" the Refuse Act as Congress had said it should, but would "defer" to FWQA and the states. "The policy of the executive," Kashiwa declared, would be to "fit" the Refuse Act into the "regulatory scheme devised by Congress to combat pollution. . . ." This meant, said Kashiwa, that the Refuse Act was not to be enforced where it would have "a disruptive or devitalizing effect upon programs designed or approved" by FWQA, or where a company was spending "significant amounts of money" to abate pollution under a FWQA program.

An incensed Reuss responded, "The law doesn't exempt polluters who spend money to clean up their mess. . . . The Justice Department should obey the law." Reuss also said, "If the Justice Department winks at

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the industrial polluter who violates the 1899 Refuse Act, there will be no incentive to... comply with water quality standards as the law requires."

But Reuss was ignored and on July 10, 1970, the Attorney General issued "guidelines" to all U.S. Attorneys which in effect told them not to enforce the Refuse Act against industrial pollution "of a continuing nature resulting from the ordinary operation of a manufacturing plant." The guidelines acknowledged that such pollution posed "the greatest threat to the environment" but said that the FWQA had been created to handle that kind of pollution. (The guidelines failed to mention that the law creating FWQA had said it was not to "affect or impair" the Refuse Act.)

The result of all this was that the Refuse Act was to be substantially a dead letter with respect to continuous industrial pollution—the field was to be left to FQWA and the states—and Jacklovich got no action from all of his phone calls. Angrily, Reuss called the Attorney General "a scofflaw where water pollution is concerned," and said that according to the Justice Department's "absurd doctrine" a polluter could continue to violate the Refuse Act if someday he were going to abate his pollution under a program of the FWQA.

Although FWQA's performance hardly seemed to warrant benching the Refuse Act through the "deference policy," perhaps the Refuse Act could stay in the ball game to "coordinate" part of the enforcement scheme. In April, 1970, Jack B. Schmetterer, then first Assistant U.S. Attorney in Chicago, told the Chicago Bar Association that the U.S. Attorney's office had reviewed its position on pollution enforcement and had decided that an aggressive prosecution policy under the Refuse Act "would prove a powerful incentive to corporate managers and officers" to cooperate with FWQA.

Schmetterer said that his office had received permission from Washington to proceed with an "incentive" program and had received excellent cooperation from the Coast Guard and the Corps of Engineers. He went on:

> I regret to report to you, however, that the one federal agency that has sophisticated technical staff and information sufficient to help us move forward against major water problems... has refused to give us that aid .... [The] absolute refusal of the Interior Department to permit the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration office [as FWQA was then called] to supply us any information or technical advice defies understanding.

Schmetterer said that his requests for specific information on specific companies had gone unanswered, that his requests for general advice as to which companies posed the most critical problems had gone unanswered, and that his final request for "just such information as would be made available to any member of the public" had not been complied with. "Perhaps," he concluded, "that attitude is due to the view of an Interior Department official who called me from Washington to ask why I wanted to prosecute 'those nice people.' "

Schmetterer's speech might have had some effect, for on paper at least FWQA in Chicago agreed that continuous discharges would be prosecuted under the Refuse Act where a firm was not in compliance with FWQA standards.

But it was not to be so. To illustrate, in September, 1970, a Jacklovich complaint was sent over to FWQA by the Corps after the Corps had been told to get FWQA recommendations. Further action, said the Corps, would be held in abeyance pending FWQA's advice.

An FWQA staff member was assigned to review the file. He concluded the evidence showed, as usual, that periodic discharges from Interlake's Riverdale plant violated the Refuse Act. His report said that prosecution under the Refuse Act "might be helpful in persuading the company to eliminate their remaining problems

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promptly." His written recommendation to that effect made its way to the desk of the FWQA boss in Chicago, Francis Mayo. At this writing it is still there. The Corps request, now over four months old, is still unanswered, and action (on an incident now over nine months old) is still held in "abeyance." Schmetterer had left office after a change in administration and there was no one around, apparently, to remind Mayo of his agreement that if a firm were "not in good cooperation" with FWQA schedules, it was a "fit subject" for Refuse Act prosecution.

Highly Coordinated Waste

Could it be that all this federal inaction was justified because Illinois was taking good care of the Interlake problem? (That wouldn't have been an excuse for non-enforcement of the Refuse Act—which Congress had said was to be "vigorously enforced"—but FWQA might legitimately take a back seat if a state were really doing an effective job.)

Way back in September, 1968, the Metropolitan Sanitary District of Chicago issued an order giving Interlake until September 30, 1969, to comply with its antipollution rules. That day came and went and Interlake was not in compliance, so the Sanitary District filed a suit which sounded as if it meant business. The lawsuit said that the District's efforts to bring voluntary compliance had failed and that Interlake's pollution posed a "grave, ever-present and great danger and immediate threat to the health, safety, and well-being" of the people of Illinois. The suit asked that Interlake be ordered to stop violating the Sanitary District rules and be fined.

Brave words. . . followed by no action. Interlake's lawyer, Henry Pitts, filed a motion which said that the Sanitary District had no right to sue Interlake at all (for the reason, among others, that it was itself a polluter!). The District did nothing to get the motion decided by the judge to whom the case was assigned and for a full year took no action at all. Then, on September 30, 1970, something was finally done—the Sanitary District requested a *delay* because "the case is not ready for trial." When asked about the suit in the fall of 1970, District officials said they hadn't pushed their law suit because they had "understood" Interlake was correcting the problems (although they couldn't be specific about exactly what was being done and what effect it would have). But, they said, they had now become disillusioned with Interlake's lack of progress and were going to push their law suit vigorously.

Meanwhile, another state agency had gone after Interlake. The Illinois Sanitary Water Board had also ordered Interlake to comply with its water quality rules by September 30, 1969. Interlake failed to comply, so the Water Board asked the Illinois Attorney General, William Scott, to sue Interlake.

Scott's suit was filed on March 2, 1970, five months after the Water Board's deadline date. A curious fact was that Scott's office didn't file a summons for five more months, meaning that Interlake wasn't formally notified of the suit until July, 1970, 10 months after the Water Board's deadline date.

At that point Interlake's lawyer, Henry Pitts, filed another motion which, among other things, questioned Scott's right to sue Interlake (nobody, it seemed, had that right) and also argued that Illinois law had been changed during the time Scott had neglected to have a summons served so that Scott was now operating under the wrong law.

Once again Pitts' motion went unanswered. This time, however, Judge Nathan Cohen, to whom the case was assigned, called for a "progress report." A new Illinois agency, the Environmental Protection Agency, prepared the report, which included the Riverdale plant as well as the others. The report, dated November 10, 1970, said that Interlake was

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making some progress but that all five of the outfalls at Riverdale were discharging pollutants in violation of the Agency's rules. The pickle liquor outfall in particular was a major offender, discharging visible amounts of oil and solids, including lead and zinc.

Judge Cohen entered an order requiring that a "final report" be filed on December 14, 1970. Ten days before then, on December 3, Pitts' law firm went to a different judge and asked that the Scott suit be "consolidated" with the moribund Sanitary District suit. It was; the case was taken from Judge Cohen; and to this date that "final report" has not been filed. The latest word at this writing is that the staff of the Environmental Protection Agency had talked to Interlake and reached the less than earth-shaking conclusion that "We don't think they've solved the problem yet." Similarly, a Sanitary District official reported that Interlake was "still having problems." (Note that the official felt it was Interlake, not the Sanitary District, or the people of Illinois, that was having the problems.)

So the circle of inaction was complete. The Refuse Act was not enforced out of "deference" to FWQA and the states. FWQA's enforcement of the law against Interlake consisted of learning that the Metropolitan Sanitary District had sampled Interlake. The Sanitary District and Attorney General Scott couldn't even get up enough steam to argue Henry Pitts' motions, and neither talked to the other about their respective law suits. When a judge did get tough, and one of the law suits finally seemed about to move forward, it was quickly consolidated with the suit that was going nowhere. This consolidation occurred exactly two-and-one-half years after the incident for which Interlake was convicted under the Refuse Act and more than two years after the deadline dates Interlake had been given by the Sanitary District and the Water Board—hardly prompt attention to the "immediate threat to the health, safety, and well-being" of the people of Illinois.

Nixon Chooses Effluent

There was, however, one effort to break out of the circle. On July 30, 1970, the Corps announced a new policy—permits would be required for all industrial discharges into navigable waters. Under the new policy Interlake would need a Corps permit to discharge any refuse and couldn't get one without Sanitary District and Water Board approvals. Presumably these agencies would decline to give approvals until Interlake complied with their orders.

The new policy looked promising on paper, and Congressman Reuss congratulated the Corps on its "progressive step," adding a hope that the Corps would implement its new policy promptly and not just issue a press release. But again it was not to be so.

Congress only appropriated half the money that the Corps had requested for its new program. On top of that there was yet another jurisdictional struggle with the recently created President's Council on Environmental Quality. At a meeting in late 1970 to try to resolve the issues, Justice Department lawyers objected to the proposed Corps program and—incredibly—walked out when the Corps insisted that the program proceed promptly. And if that weren't enough, another new agency (yes, still another), the Environmental Protection Agency, felt that it, not the Corps, should control the new program.

So even though President Nixon's announcement on December 23, 1970, of "more activist utilization of the Refuse Act" sounded good, as usual, it seemed to mean simply that one more program would be trapped in the FWQA-type administrative maze.

Nixon's statement seemed promising. He said that Corps permits would be immediately required for any new discharges on navigable

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waters and that industry would have to file for permits on existing discharges by July 1, 1971. "In the meantime," the President said, "violators of water quality standards would not be exempt from prosecution under the Refuse Act."

Moreover, Nixon referred to requiring "effluent data" for industrial discharges, a key point. If enforcement of a permit system were tied to exactly what came out of the end of a discharge pipe, it would be a lot more precise than under water quality standards—applicable to the condition of the receiving waters as a whole. One Illinois official, referring to water quality standards, said, "Because of this trick, and that's all it is, we've got U.S. Steel dumping 150 pounds of cyanide per day into the lake. . . ."

The Pickle Liquor Pipe

But implementing the permit program was a different matter, as we shall see. Accompanying the Nixon statement was an order which assigned administrative responsibility to the Corps, but also said the Corps should accept the determinations of the Environmental Protection Agency on water quality matters. On the last day of 1970, the Corps published its proposed permit regulations and allowed a 45-day public comment period, after which the regulations might be made final.

Comment was not long in coming. Reuss, who had gotten a draft of the regulation before it was made public, said the draft was inadequate and inconsistent with existing law. There followed 14 single-spaced pages of detailed objections. He suggested the proposed permit regulation be revised.

It was not. Two leading environmental organizations, Friends of the Earth and the Natural Resources Defense Council, also objected. They said the proposed administration program would actually hinder water pollution abatement. They objected to the fact that the Administration had violated one of its own environmental protection laws in the very issuance of the new regulations in that it did not prepare and submit to the public an "environmental impact statement" as required by law.

More importantly, said the Defense Council, the new program was susceptible to administrative delay, EPA's role was vague, effluent standards were not mentioned, there was no clear-cut method to insure compliance with permit conditions, and public participation provisions were vague. The permit program seemed designed to transform the simple, effective Refuse Act into another Rube Goldberg, FWQA-type administrative maze.

A proposed memorandum of understanding between the Corps and the Environmental Protection Agency spelled out the role of the two agencies a little more but did not change the proposed regulations in any significant respect. There was still no suggestion that Refuse Act court actions would be used as the enforcement mechanism. The Justice Department was not even mentioned.

Meanwhile, back at Interlake's Riverdale plant, nothing has happened except that Jacklovich was fired and the Little Calumet River continues to receive Interlake's discharges. On May 26, 1970, one year to the very day after Interlake's conviction, Interlake discharged, according to Corps files, "an orange liquid at the rate of 500 gallons per minute which covered approximately 300 feet in length and half the width of the Little Calumet River." Samples and photographs were taken, and the Corps report says that the facts showed a violation of the Refuse Act. A copy of the report was mailed to the U.S. Attorney. Presumably out of "deference," nothing was done. The discharge was from the waste pickle liquor outfall.

On November 19, 1970, a weary Jacklovich himself sued Interlake. His theory was that since the Refuse Act entitled him to half the fine, and the U.S. Attorney wasn't doing anything,

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he was entitled to bring a citizen's action to recover his half of the fine and enforce the Act.

As might have been expected, Henry Pitts vigorously opposed Jacklovich's right to sue. It remains to be seen what the court will do with Jacklovich's theory. And what the people will do with John Mitchell's.

Friends Can Be Poison

What conclusions can be drawn from the Jacklovich Interlake story? Interlake may be one of the *better* companies in dealing with pollution. Although its concern with its corporate image has led it to be less than candid, and although it has been painfully slow in remedying its pollution problems, it may still—incredible though it seems—have moved faster than many if not most companies. It is difficult to fault Interlake for not being willing to spend pollution control dollars faster than its competitors are required to, and they were not, of course, forced to comply with the law any more effectively than was Interlake.

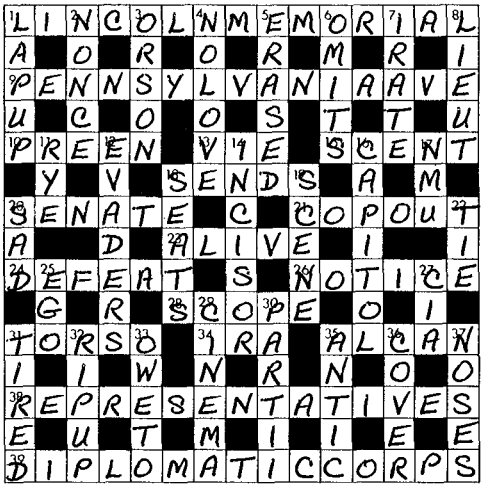
The result has been that literally years have gone by without adequate enforcement of existing antipollution laws—years during which increments of Interlake pollution have been added to the public's waters long after the pollution should have ended. Uncounted dollars and hours of government time have been spent in useless activity and buck-passing. Letters, reports, conferences, sampling, lawsuits, more conferences—everything has happened except the one thing that would have been effective: an injunction order under the Refuse Act. The Coast Guard, the Corps, the Justice Department, the FWQA, the Sanitary District, the Water Board, the Illinois Attorney General—all have been involved in one way or another, largely without cooperation, or even communication, and indeed frequently justifying their own inaction because of what other agencies were supposed to be doing.

Meanwhile, the life of Lake Michigan is edging toward irreversible degradation. Three years ago, then Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall said, "Delay means death to Lake Michigan." One year ago, a scientist working under an FWQA grant said that the lake was at the "break point" of drastic changes in the ecosystem.

There should be no "deference" to anybody unless and until the states and FWQA (now called the Office of Water Quality and a part of the Environmental Protection Agency) impose specific and adequate pollution-ending requirements and set firm dates for compliance. Until then, the Refuse Act should be "vigorously" enforced, as Congress said. The injunctive power should be used to impose specific, pollution-ending schedules on a plant-by-plant basis. If and when the states and FWQA get around to imposing adequate schedules, the Refuse Act should be used to enforce them. A comply-or-close-down court order will deliver a much clearer message than a dozen FWQA enforcement conferences.

Until some such program is worked out, we can anticipate continuations and repetitions of the Interlake story, and worse. Lake Michigan might still be saved from its enemies if given half a chance. The question is whether it can survive its friends. ■

Answers to February's puzzle:



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CONFERENCE ON CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

May 12 & 13 1971 Shoreham Hotel Washington D.C.

PROFITS AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Angry demonstrations, outbreaks of unparalleled bitterness, and even a macing incident marred annual meetings across the country last year. A Bank of America office was burned to the ground. Students attacked Dow Chemical recruiters because the company produced napalm. Picketers gave the Chase Bank a lot of publicity for doing business in South Africa. And James Roche learned that many of the nation's major institutional investors may vote their shares *for* "Campaign GM" this year if General Motors doesn't respond to the objections of the Project for Corporate Responsibility.

WHO IS NEXT?

Your corporation may be the next to lose business and investors because you appear socially unresponsive. Or, if you are an investing institution, you may soon find your management attacked because of what you hold or how you vote your shares. Consequently, no corporate official concerned for his company's public image nor institutional investor can afford to miss this meeting. At "Profits and the Public Interest," the leaders of every major phase of the corporate responsibility movement will say whom they plan to attack next, for what reasons, and using what tactics. Government figures from the Hill and the agencies will say how they think the Federal government should control socially destructive acts of corporations. And key figures from corporations who have already suffered attack will say what they have learned and how they are working to meet this challenge.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND THIS CONFERENCE

Top corporate officials: Because your image with the public today can dramatically affect the value of your stock, your ability to attract customers, and the degree of regulation under which you labor;

Corporate public relations officials: Because your personal future depends on your ability to interpret public attitudes to your top officers, and advise them on how to respond;

Institutional portfolio managers: Because you may lose shareholders, donations, or trust customers if you cannot defend your investment policies and the way you vote your stock in light of the public interest;

Wall Street research leaders: Because the social responsibility of a company has now been added to your checklist of things you must know about a corporation in order to know how the market should — and will — evaluate its stock.

A PARTIAL LIST OF THE SPEAKERS

EILEEN ADAMS authored the Nader report on false and misleading advertising in TV;

CLIFFORD L. ALEXANDER JR. is the former chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission who has a lot to say on hiring practices of major corporations;

JOSEPH A. CALIFANO, JR. is the former White House assistant who acted as the Coca-Cola/Minute Maid counsel in the recent migrant worker dispute;

ROBERT B. CHOATE is the former assistant to the director of The White House Conference on Food, Nutrition & Health who appalled the nation — and changed its eating habits — when he told how low common cereals are in nutritional content;

PHILIP ELMAN is, as a former Commissioner of the Federal Trade Commission, in a perfect position to tell what consumers and corporations can expect out of the Federal Government;

JOHN C. ESPOSITO wrote *Vanishing Air,* the Nader-team book that highlighted the specifics of air pollution by corporations;

SENATOR PHILIP A. HART is on key committees dealing with public issues such as ecology and antitrust and has been a leading Congressman in the battle for corporate public responsibility;

NICHOLAS JOHNSON has made himself famous as the member of the Federal Communications Commission who can't be kept quiet on the ominous power — and how it is used — of tv broadcasters;

DANIEL LUFKIN is a partner of the Wall Street firm of Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette and has long been a spokesman on the subject of corporate responsibility and how investors should influence the corporations;

PHILIP W. MOORE JR. is executive director of the Project on Corporate Responsibility that has caused General Motors to hire a special man to handle public-responsibility image, and to put a distinguished black member of the public on its board;

ROGER MURRAY is the former director of investments for the powerful College Retirement Equities Fund who has spoken out firmly on the need for large institutions to use their power to effect social change;

E. HAYES REDMON is the executive assistant Dr. Edwin Land used to represent Polaroid-Land Company in its recent struggles over Polaroid's future in South America;

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER IV is the Secretary of State of West Virginia who led the fight against the ravages of strip mining in that state and who was also a leading spokesman for Campaign GM;

CONGRESSMAN BENJAMIN S. ROSENTHAL is the author of the 1970 consumer protection agency bill;

ALICE TEPPER heads the Council on Economic Priorities which has received nationwide TV and magazine coverage for its authoritative report on the pollution of the paper industry — and has forced several companies to speed their pollution control efforts as a result;

JAMES S. TURNER is author of the Nader report *The Chemical Feast* which revealed the extent to which meaningless and sometimes poisonous additives are corrupting our food.

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America the Featherbedded

by Suzannah Lessard

Finding your way around Long Island potato patches these days isn't exactly difficult but you do have the sense of working through a childishly anglophilic maze-puzzle: right on Churchill, left on Oxford, left on Cambridge, right on Guinevere, left on Arthur's Court. Though the little houses in rows yield no sign of trauma, those fairylands of yore are suffering a rude awakening. Pentagon money, the magic stuff that brought them *poof* out of the nowhere into the here, has suddenly vanished: the fairy godmother has turned fickle, and no Rex Futurus appears on the horizon. The quicksilver running thin, suburban glamor is beginning to look drab and trinkety to the stunned children of the realm, who, unequipped for rougher atmospheres, retreat into their obscurity, drawing their white collars closely around them, persevering in the old rituals and niceties. Blind faith? Shock? "You punch a guy in the eye and you don't see anything right away. But slowly it will get bluer and blacker and then you have an egg. It's a slow process."

Although defense work by no means monopolized employment in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, providing roughly 60,000 of 150,000 jobs in industry, it is the foundation on which the Long Island boom was launched and the repercussions of massive layoffs by the defense-oriented companies have reached all areas of economic life. Architects, accountants, and delivery boys—even a priest—have been registered among the jobless by the Nassau Employment Task Force. Few small businesses have not felt the chill. Yet silence is the order of the day. Local officials are mum, the Defense Contract Administration acknowledges no crisis, much less responsibility, and the people themselves, the unemployed and those threatened with unemployment, are withdrawn and secretive. Behind the silence lurks the unacceptable suspicion that a fundamental American myth is finally tearing at the seams.

Ironically, many of the people who work in the defense industry went into their fields not because they were particularly attracted to the work but because they were led to believe that security was one of the sure rewards of those professions—for instance, that a country absorbed in the demanding work of progress would always have a thirst for engineers. The larger theorem behind this corollary was that in America, if you get an education—a white collar—and are reasonably industrious there will always be a place for you. Consequently, for a believer there is a deep shame implicit in being unemployed: Despite the fact that the situation is far beyond the defense engineer's

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control, being out of work signifies that he is lazy or incompetent like the blacks and poor people who are screaming, in such an un-American manner, for free handouts instead of "striving." The layoffs have precipitated a collision of myth and reality which has left the victims speechless.

The myth has been out of joint with reality all along: the cautious white-collar, security-bound life in post-war America has little to do with rugged individualism, versatility, or even ambition, the classical traits which in the land of opportunity yield great rewards. The valiant struggle against adversity for wealth and honor typified by the Horatio Alger figures has become the valiant struggle for a piece of paper which is a passport into the white-collar corporate world where conformity is the mark of respectability—the new honor—and where adversity, kept well at bay by untold buffers, is unmentionable. But the myth lives on. The engineer is likely to see himself as a person who has striven hard and succeeded in the classical American style, and he believes that anyone with gumption could do the same. Now that he is unemployed—undesirable—he feels ashamed, tainted, and helpless. The cruelest consequence is his helplessness. He knows only dependence—how to go to work every day, sit at a desk, and come home with a check all under the protective aegis of a big company. Now the institutions for whom he has sacrificed so much of his individuality have discarded him with ease, and his virtues and accomplishments are unsaleable elsewhere. The myth mocks him. He feels used, duped, bewildered, and retreats into a schizoid silence. "Grumman lays off 3,000" report the newspapers, almost routinely, and the 3,000 disperse, eyes downcast, to their little houses on Longbow Drive and Crossbow Lane. Everyone is agreed. No one wants to talk about it.

Almost no one. Some people, as though finally unmuzzled by rejection, are singing out right from the middle of white-collar Middle America like prophets in a wilderness calling the bluff. Keith Bose, engineer and technical writer with 25 years' experience, is one of the grass-roots iconoclasts. His basic thesis is that he and his compatriots have been cast aside so easily because they weren't doing anything of real value all along and hence have nothing to bargain with. "There is a creeping sensation of futility which follows the white-collar worker to his job these days. . . of being an expendable pawn. . . neither frugality nor industry will help us escape." The defense industry is notorious for padded staffs and superfluous activity, but it is hardly alone. When the recession hit, many strictly commercial companies laid off hundreds of people without hindering production, referring to these *people* as "corporate fat." "If Black America is crying for recognition," says Bose, "White America is praying that the myth of indispensability will endure . . . . If we appear uninterested in the politics of government, it is because we are consumed by the politics of keeping our job."

What angers Bose is the degradation implicit in being corporate fat, aggravated by the knowledge that it's impossible to speak out without forfeiting your security—since the work is useless, you are easily dispensed with and since there is a surplus of workers, you are easily replaced—difficult in fact to admit this to yourself without forfeiting whatever fragments of dignity your ephemeral status has lent you.

In his own community Bose has tried to "break this middle-class habit of silence" through an organization he calls Self Help. Though Self Help works to find jobs for its members, its primary and most effective function is as a forum, where people can pool their experience, exchange thoughts, and allow long-suppressed frustrations to surface in the company of people who have endured the same conditions. This alone is revolutionary for these people. That sort of candor has

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long been purged from the company man's character. Even telling a colleague one's salary is often beyond the pale of exchange, and more crucial than secretiveness about salaries is the taboo against saying, "Most of what I do is horse feathers." Not only would you open your right flank to the rivals all around you but you would be troublemaking, a kind of behavior absolutely unacceptable within the code of "professionalism."

This code has benefited the corporate powers—creating a primary allegiance to the boss and a suspicion-fraught relationship between employees—but it has also sabotaged them, encouraging inefficiency, smothering candor, and allowing flaccid unmanageable structures to thrive. The real crime, however, is against the adherents to the code, forcing them to drift farther and farther both into trivial work and dependence on it. Most people recoil from speaking out. But those who break through the engrained habit of silence are vivid witnesses to the extent of deprivation and pent-up frustration in the white-collar world. Members of Self Help thrashing out their thoughts with each other is a passionate, messy affair, full of storm, black humor, apocalypse, disillusionment, anguish, and rage. It makes an SDS meeting look like a Sunday school picnic.

The issue of profession is a hot one. These are people talking about the shank of their life. "You can't just say for 30 years I've been doing nothing. Some people say it's a joke one day and are serious tomorrow," said a man who was doing exactly that from moment to moment. There's resistance: "We *did* get to the moon, and that blob on top of Dr. von Braun's rocket came from Bethpage—maybe we worked ourselves out of a job." And the response: "The creative engineering, the real work in design is done in the universities. We're just technicians." Another man dismissed the possiblity of functioning as a professional on worthwhile projects as unattainable. He said that obviously most of what they produced was esoteric junk, but that that was irrelevant: "This jackass Proxmire, for instance, says we don't need the SST. Of course we don't need the SST. We can make yoyos for all I care. It doesn't matter what you make but who makes it and where."

Bose on profession: "Professional life for us, particularly in the military-industrial empires, became an exercise in trivia. . . characterized more by jargon than the discipline of honest technology. . . relieved only by the pleasures of split-level materialism . . . . A great majority of the actual skills required of the middle-class wage earner could be acquired in a few weeks or months of training. . . . At some point in our careers we became conscious that we had no profession at all, and we hungered for a secret jargon to protect us, as hippies devise secret words." Some cryptograms from *The New York Times*' help-wanted section:

Manpower Development Specialist
Production Traffic Analyst
Quality Assurance Supervisor
Logistics Control Engineer
Planning Analyst

Bose's main theme is the loss of "human bargaining power" in the white-collar empires. He uses the term in a literal economic sense as well as philosophically. The two levels are very close: When people are doing inflated, useless work it is very easy to appropriate their powers of self-determination. The tendency will be that they won't even question this loss of control, but even if they do, they won't have the bargaining power to challenge it. Once they are dispensable they are helpless in the "insecurity within security" strait jacket. This is a realization that seeds a deep unquenchable rebellion, rebellion against having had to put up with it and against being tossed away with it. "In the history of civilization, America has now added a new facet—the throw-away, pop-top culture. Among billions of tons of non-returnable

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bottles and saddening hulks of automobiles, we have now added the middle-class worker."

It's sad that people don't let the rebellion surface until they are out of the ball game, but it's there, unformed, nevertheless. People don't like being wasted. It's not good for them and it makes them unhappy. No matter what their salary, they don't like being corporate fat, or bureaucratic excrescence, or credential padding. They can be paid off, and they will hide their outrage, their disappointment, and disillusionment from themselves as well as the outside world, but that doesn't make the situation any less corrosive. "The majority of the people in this process don't know that's happening to them," said an ex-engineer.

Clearly a mass revolt is not on the threshold. Apathy, mistrust, the absence of channels of communication and forums for ideas in most middle-class communities, shame, and indifference to others are powerful deterrents. It's questionable too whether people who have spent their whole lives in service to a myth would be capable of change. So far most of them have reacted to unemployment in catatonic privacy. The drive, if any, has been towards covering up. Many families go on as if nothing has happened, go on building the swimming pool, coasting on unemployment benefits and savings.

One man felt so ashamed of being laid off that he couldn't tell his wife, and for six months got up in the morning and drove off as though he were going to work. Others, in a desperate effort to preserve the status quo, break their necks taking jobs as cabbies and waiters, just so they can go on living in the $50,000 house, wearing new clothes and paying for the '71 Pontiac. But then the real crunch hasn't come yet. People can still coast, can still pretend that everything will right itself. There is no telling what they will do if forced to the wall, whether there will be a lot of disappearing Daddies or if, in the drastic atmosphere, ideas like Keith Bose's will ignite and either change a small but significant number of people's lives or catch on in a major way and wreak fundamental changes in the nation's mythology.

Whatever the case, it looks as though there just aren't enough white-collar jobs to go around. And if you consider everyone in a superfluous job (whether bureaucratic or industrial technically unemployed—in that what he is doing is useless—then the amount of real work diminishes further. The members of Bose's group tend to see most jobs which are paid with taxpayers' money, like defense, as essentially WPA projects, a way of getting money back to the people in an acceptable "free enterprise" fashion, a way of artificially priming the pump in a creaking economic system. "It doesn't matter what you make but who makes it and where."

Looking at the economy from its soft underbelly, they see the economic and political leaders as totally unaware—either intentionally or because their commitment to old ideas makes them unable to see differently —of the real nature of the socio-economic system. They roar with laughter, for instance, at anyone who suggests that minorities are out in the cold because they are black or uneducated, and doesn't see that there's simply no room for them in the system. They are extremely skeptical of suggestions that we turn towards ecology and pollution for a new source of meaningful work, not because it doesn't need to be done, but because it would probably be only a variation on the defense set-up—government contracts with all the concommitant vagaries given out to companies called Ecological Systems Management, Inc., with all the old habits of fudging, padding, getting nothing done, and dehumanizing people. In this sense, they will say, ecology may provide a stopgap for the present middle-aged unemployed, but it will in no way solve the basic problem.

So Keith Bose and his friends are

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saying two things. First, that the method of solving unemployment by building offices and creating companies to take up the slack, installing desks and telephones and typewriters to give the millions of Keith Boses their titles and paychecks is breaking down. Because of the huge number of workers graduating every year into an economy already straining against unemployment they are certain that they themselves, those over 40 who have been discarded in the present crisis, will never get back in, and by extension, seriously doubt that enough niches can be created to place the legions of new arrivals. Secondly, they are saying that even if you assume that enough niches can be created, the interior price of occupying them is devastating. People who grow up hoping to do something interesting, useful, and human are finding themselves enslaved in the manufacture of paper nonsense or hard-core junk, trivial activity which by its nature denies those engaged in it the most rudimentary satisfactions of purposeful labor.

To create more frou-frou jobs in an effort to swing the nation back to prosperity is to evade the challenge of the present crisis and only to aggravate the situation. The challenge is to redefine work. Work is effort directed towards the production or accomplishment of something useful. If the habit of thinking about work that way superceded the habit of responding to titles and monetary rewards, if education instead of gearing people up to getting a passport to high-paying, important-sounding niches developed an aversion to triviality as an affront to dignity, if the people in power looked at the working force as energy and talent to be applied to what needs to be done, it would become immediately apparent how wastefully fatuous the present system and projected policies are. The challenge is not to create a vacuous picture of prosperity. The challenge is to free the working force from the meshes of trivia and turn it towards the mountains of real work that needs to be done. ■

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Memo of the Month

TO: ALL PERSONNEL

As we are now all aware of the news that Dick Feezle has accepted a position with the Office of Management and Budget, Washington, D.C.-- it is only fitting that we have a farewell party for Dick, who we all hold in the highest esteem.

*The following is the suggested method of conveying our tribute to a "real nice guy":

1. Buffet on Thursday noon January 28.
2. Suggested Donation: GS-13 and above $5.00
   GS-9 - GS-12 $2.00
   Other Personnel $1.00
3. Invite Mrs. Feezle and Children.
4. Suggested Gifts:
   Mrs. Feezle - Corsage Estimated Cost $10.00
   Mr. Feezle - Desk Lighter to be engraved "OEO FRIENDS-BOSTON" or similar sentiment. 38.00

   Approximate cost of Buffet for 120 people ---------- 132.00

TOTAL COST ESTIMATE $180.00

Honorary Collectors:

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*Additional suggestions which would enhance this occasion will be appreciated.

"The Committee for Dick Feezle and Family Tribute"

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The Rising Profits of Public Service

by Taylor Branch

There have been 10 federal salary increases since the fall of 1962, and they have been the prime ingredients in doubling the U.S. payroll from about $25 billion to more than $50 billion in nine years. Since mid-1969 alone, the basic annual cost of the 4.3 million white-collar employees and servicemen has risen by about $6.2 billion. Over the same period of time, the annual welfare costs of the United States have increased only $1.7 billion—a comparatively trifling figure, but one which has the nation almost howling with pain and which President Nixon has called "a monstrous consuming outrage" for the taxpayer and the poor. Most of the welfare increase has resulted from the addition of three million souls to the rolls, while the basic white-collar/military salary group—which excludes federal blue-collar workers and mailmen—has actually declined. And there is a further distinction between the costs of welfare and federal salaries: this $6.2 billion in federal pay raises has generated an increase of about $15 billion in the unfunded liability of the military and civil service retirement systems, a debt to the retired public servants of the future about which the public itself and much of the Congress is largely ignorant.

Taylor Branch is a managing editor of The Washington Monthly.

Your interest may be drawn to these matters by more than your coarse material instincts as a taxpayer or a government employee. You may, for example, be interested in national priorities or inflation. Inflation may indeed flow from the basic salary process, which now produces almost automatic annual increases for one worker out of every 19 in the United States. Or you may be interested in fairness—in the fact that a grade 5 secretary's salary has risen only $2,800 since 1962, while a grade 13 (the captains or majors of the civil service) salary has increased about $8,100, and the grade 18 (the highest in the civil service) salary has doubled from $18,000 to $36,000.

On January 8, 1971, when he signed the Federal Pay Comparability Act of 1970, President Nixon assumed almost exclusive control over salary policy. Two of his employees, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission, take the figures from a survey of salaries in private industry and make obscure but controversial adjustments to produce

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a new pay schedule which will keep federal pay comparable with private enterprise. Their recommendation becomes effective automatically each year without congressional involvement, except in the unlikely event that the President should disagree with them and propose an alternative. This centralization of control, along with the prospect of perpetual pay increases, is the culmination of continuing changes in the pay structure which began with the Salary Reform Act of 1962.

Pay Goes to the Moon

When the Kennedy Administration came to power in 1961, it was pledged to get the country moving again. Government was no longer to play the docile referee role of the Eisenhower years, but Washington would have to be a prime mover and problem solver. Business seemed to have lost the juices required for independent growth, and the problems of the nation were so intertwined that central direction seemed mandatory. To restructure government for a new, permanent role of activism, the image of the government worker needed a transformation—a pay hike for the idealists among the new frontiersmen was required to grant them the sense of self-respect that makes sacrifice worthwhile.

The dilemma of the Kennedy Administration rose from the President's 1962 Economic Report, which set "guideposts for noninflationary wage and price behavior"—built upon the assumption that inflation would occur if a worker received a pay raise greater than his increase in productivity. Having said that, the Administration ran into the embarrassing fact that there is no way to measure productivity in government, leading to the economist's assumption that productivity increases in the public sector are always zero. Government workers produce decisions, rules, programs, and an occasional inspiration, but nothing whose market value can be systematically measured. And if their productivity increase is zero, then the President's own guideposts would condemn their wage increases as inflationary.

The task of the Administration was not so much to convince people that federal employees were poorly paid. The problem was to get rid of the idea that all government pay increases are inherently inflationary. Comparability was the key idea. The Administration proposed that the U.S. government *assume* that government productivity rises as rapidly as productivity in the private sector, and therefore that government pay increases equal to the growth in national productivity would not be inflationary. From there it was a relatively short jump to the position that government salaries should be equal to employee counterparts in private business: if the productivity is the same, then the pay should be the same.

Administration witnesses went before congressional committees to argue for the President's bill establishing comparability as the official government pay policy. John Macy, Chairman of the Civil Service Commission, hammered home the idea that legislators would no longer have to eyeball each jobholder and summon the courage to declare how much they thought that jobholder was worth to the taxpayer. With comparability, there would be a standard, numbers, something for the harried politician to lean on.

There was another reason to "take politics out of government pay"—namely that the political bargaining over government salaries had always given an advantage to the lower ranks of public employees. The clerks and postal workers and the secretaries had more political clout than the administrators at pay time simply because there were many more votes among them and they were better organized. So they had succeeded in getting a lot of flat dollar increases through Congress—like $330 across-the-board in 1948 and $140 in 1949—rather than

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proportionally higher increases for the managerial ranks. It was almost like socialism, everybody getting the same. But the Administration's bill would redress such "wage compression" with comparability because the Bureau of Labor Statistics survey showed that managers in business were far better paid than policy operatives and bureaucratic professionals in the government. Elmer Staats, then Deputy Budget Director, estimated that the bulk of the cost in reaching comparability would result from upgrading the middle-level managers in grades 11 through 15 (whose 1962 salaries ranged from an average of $8,340 in grade 11 to $14,275 in grade 15, while current figures are $13,878 and $26,675 respectively).

Despite all the attractiveness of the comparability idea and the wisdom of stimulating a slack 1962 economy, the President's pay bill needed an additional boost to get past a Congress which was still clamoring for a balanced budget and remembering the good old days when you could joke about paying the bureaucrats in used erasers. The Administration added a new argument: that a salary increase would not cost money, it would actually save many dollars by attracting the kind of top-flight managers who could chop fat out of administration and get the job done cheaper. To this difficult calculation was added a message with zip and truth and a little sexiness to it: that the crusades, purposes, and problems of the nation would henceforth focus on the government. Thus it was proclaimed that the Administration needed to attract the cream of the crop to public service, as all eyes turned toward the Administration's efforts to catch up in the missile race, establish the Peace Corps, halt nuclear testing in the atmosphere, and beat the Russians to the moon. Testifying for his boss, then Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg, Daniel P. Moynihan instructed the House as to its duty:

> I would like respectfully to suggest that it is our conviction that if you are interested in reducing the labor cost of the Federal Government for the services it performs to the public, it is essential to pay adequate salaries to get the quality of personnel that will do that for you. If you want to reach the moon in this decade, as the President has said, we will have to get the men to do that.

The pay increase may not have saved much money, but the moon argument helped, as it was in the spirit of the times. The Salary Reform Act of 1962 passed in October and went into effect just before the Cuban missile crisis.

Funding the Crisis Managers

Although the new law magnified the importance of the comparability surveys and made the increases that followed from them seem far more legitimate, pay raises still required boosts in the 1960s. Administration spokesmen emphasized that top-level increases were essential—with help from people like James Reston, who discussed the problem in *The New York Times* on March 15, 1964:

> Part of the difficulty is that Congress has refused to raise the pay of one group of public servants unless it can raise them all. It draws no distinction between a secretary who wrestles with letters and an Under Secretary who wrestles with De Gaulle. . . .
>
> So long as Congress refuses to distinguish between a postman and a scientist and between the shortage of brains and the surplus of bodies in Washington, the problem is insoluble, but there is a way to reconcile sanity with solvency.

And as Congress became better acquainted with the political wisdom of increasing the salaries of employee union members each election year, the upgrading of federal pay continued—until President Nixon achieved full comparability by ordering a 9.1 per cent increase effective July 1, 1969.

Then the 1970 postal strike generated a six per cent increase for all federal employees, and most Washington observers detected the end of an era. There had been nine pay increases since the 1962 comparability legislation, which erased much of the civil

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servant's economic deprivation. In his *Washington Post* column for government employees, Mike Causey wrote that "the financially sacrificing federal executive, long considered a dedicated but underpaid soul, isn't doing so badly these days." He predicted that pay increases would be much harder to come by in the 1970s because of rapidly diminishing public sentiment for the plight of civil servants, and because the powerful mailmen had departed from the employee consortium into their own salary system under the postal reorganization plan.

It thus came as something of a surprise when Senator Gale McGee, Chairman of the Senate Post Office and Civil Service Committee, brought a new pay bill to the floor of the Senate on December 30, 1970, in one of those evening sessions as the 91st Congress struggled to end itself.

Senator McGee's bill, which passed the Senate that night and was guided through the House by Congressman Morris Udall on New Year's Eve, boiled down to a transferral of power over pay matters to the President. Congress would have no authority at all unless the President managed to disagree with his "agent" (a team composed of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission, both appointed by the President) and to recommend an alternative to comparability. Even then, Congress would have only two options: accept the President's alternative, or reject it. But in the latter case the OMB-Civil Service Commission pay schedule would automatically take effect. So Congress, when involved at all, could only choose between two plans, both of which emanated from the White House.

A week later, the President signed the McGee-Udall bill and ordered the first pay increase under his new authority, the six per cent comparability adjustment that began with the numbers collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. He will order a similar raise on January 1, 1972, and thereafter the changes will go into effect each October 1. The first October adjustment, in 1972, is expected to have some relevance to the election that year.

It is clear that the new law will result in substantial new pay increases for federal employees each year, although they will probably not be as large as the 20 per cent raise in salaries which President Nixon has ordered since July, 1969, in the eighth, ninth, and tenth increases based on the 1962 Salary Reform Act. What you think of comparability probably depends on whether you work for the government or think it possible you may work for the government some day. Or you may just think that comparability sounds like an equitable way to proceed, which it does. In any case, opinions on the subject may be affected by some information about what comparability means, which also provides insight into how much leeway the President and his agent have to play with the numbers and maximize their options.

The Pyramid of Distinction

The key to comparability is, of course, the Bureau of Labor Statistics survey, and the key to the survey is what goes into it. This is determined by a committee of officials at the Office of Management and Budget and the Civil Service Commission, which has reduced the scope of the survey to about 1.7 million white-collar employees—out of the nearly 23 million who work outside the federal government. This is accomplished by various restrictions, such as the exclusion of small businesses, but the real controversy centers upon the process of job-matching—in which the committee links various government jobs with their 1.7 million counterparts. The unions charge that the committee stuffs lower-than-average-paying positions into the survey selections at the bottom grade levels, where union membership is concentrated.

Although there is less controversy,

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the figures at the high levels are also suspect. Take grade 15 (salary range $24,251-$31,523), for example, where pay is determined by comparing three jobs—grade 15 attorneys, chemists, and engineers—with the 5,000 or so private industry counterparts in the survey. The BLS obtains a figure for each of the three jobs, calculates a numerical average, and out comes the salary level for all grade 15 employees in the government—only about one fourth of whom are attorneys, chemists, and engineers.

Some details shake faith in the grade 15 numbers—such as the fact that the survey excludes lawyers practicing on their own and includes only salaried attorneys, who populate large corporations. The chemists and engineers are problems because about 50 to 60 per cent of them work under contract to the government, according to an unpublished study for the Council of Economic Advisers. This causes acute worry when one realizes that contract salaries for the government are notoriously "flexible," meaning high.

Of course, those are only the adjustments of what goes *into* the BLS survey. When the numbers come out, there is room for further flexibility. They then go to the OMB-CSC committee for revision according to the second requirement of the comparability law—that "pay distinctions be maintained in keeping with work and performance distinctions." This process, called constructing a payline, is full of delicacies which are usually appreciated only by those who make or lose money by them.

The committee's calculations—involving the relative amounts of distinction contained in an enormous variety of jobs, education levels, performances, and the like—are designed to be understood only by the professional in personnel management.

This is the heart of comparability. A personnel manager is not terribly concerned about output, efficiency, or specific job function—he sees the world in terms of *levels*, as an orderly

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pattern of grids and niches leading up to the top in accordance with increasing distinction. Each level is defined primarily by the population in the levels immediately above and below. In actual personnel management, there is a second, though far less important, rule: jobs at the bottom levels are characterized by constant repetition, concrete tasks, and simplicity (therefore boredom), while those at the upper levels become increasingly sporadic in production, vague, and complex.

There are a couple of special properties to the personnel approach. First, there must be enough employees in any establishment to figure out everybody's relative level—so that all the people in the middle have others above and below them, to whom they are related by the chain of command. "When you have a job with only one person or so, say an engineer in a small company, it's more difficult," says Alan Paisner, one of about 100 BLS data collectors who start comparability rolling every year. "It's tough to classify his level because there's no pattern of who reports to him. But firms like that have less impact statistically than the big aerospace firms." So there must be a sizable organization, which is why most survey data is collected from industry's personnel and salary administrators.

Another special property is that the comparability system cannot handle people who perform more than one function. You must be specialized so that you can be classified so that you can be assigned a level. People who do a little of everything—sweep the floor, pay the bills, make decisions, write *and* type letters—mess things up because they operate on more than one level. They are discarded by the survey.

One special benefit of the level-making system is the increasing vagueness of the job descriptions at the higher levels. Since government grade levels are determined by a description of the job on paper, a skillful person can write a description of his duties in such distinctive, sweeping language that he will be promoted solely for that ingenuity, which of course ought to be worth something. Moreover, he can do this without lying and without any danger of being found out—because both his description and his actual job are so thoroughly nestled in the realm of vagueness that no one can possibly detect a discrepancy between the two.

Congress as Loan Shark

The handful of economists who know anything about federal salary systems generally feel that the current government salaries are higher than true comparability would warrant, at every grade. They criticize the process for not taking civil service job protection into account. "A window cleaner on the ground will not get the same pay as a window cleaner on a skyscraper even though they are doing the same thing," observed one economist, scientifically. "The way comparability is now administered, by ignoring the added security produced by tenure in the government you are paying them both the same."

The strongest economic objection to government salary calculations is that they ignore the benefits of the military and civil service retirement plans. Over half of private businesses have no retirement plans for their employees, who must get by on Social Security. Since Social Security is a far less generous plan, this factor alone gives the government an advantage. But there is a far greater difference. Government retirement benefits are based on the highest salaries of an employee's career (final salary in the military, an average of the highest three in the civil service), while contributions to the system—one half paid by the government—are designed to provide only for retirement on the current salary base. Every government pay increase, therefore, involves a retirement "gift" to the employees, who will live out their old age on a higher pension than they were con-

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tributing to before the increase.

Everyone is for comfortable pensions, of course, but the other side of the employee "gift" is a hidden public debt of enormous proportions. The civil service retirement fund now has about $65 billion less invested than it needs to be able to pay the obligations which the public owes to the retired employees of the future. Each year, that liability grows by the amount of the interest the $65 billion would have earned if the fund were balanced. The deficit was $43 billion in 1966. In addition to the loss of interest each year, the liability grows by $2.55 for each dollar of a pay increase. The most recent increase thus added about $2.55 billion to the deficit in the civil service fund. The military system is even worse off, with an unfunded liability about twice the $65 billion figure.

Without a new financing procedure, "the retirement fund would have been bankrupt by 1980," calculates Andrew Ruddock, chief of the Civil Service Commission's Retirement Division. So Congress finally passed a law authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to transfer, "from the general revenues of the United States," whatever funds are necessary to pay the interest on the unfunded liability and thereby keep the deficit from growing. Treasury will make its first such payment this next summer—estimated at $236 million, or 10 per cent of the required interest—and will work up to a full stabilizing payment by 1980. All these funds are separate from the budget, requiring no appropriations.

Congress also made a rather shaky provision for the liability flowing from the annual comparability adjustment. Now the law says that each pay increase bill shall "deem to authorize" annual appropriations to pay for the increased retirement liability over the following 30 years. The 1971 payment, the first one under the new law, is estimated to be $157 million. It will stay constant for 30 years. Next year's increase will require its own payment, and so on—so that there could be as many as 30 payments made in a single year.

Even if you think that government retirement should be a lot better than the average private plan, you have trouble supporting the way it has been handled. Essentially, officeholders have found it profitable to vote for pay increases which obligate the country to pay off the "gift" portion of millions of pensions about 30 years from now. The employees and their unions know the value of the pension, and how it grows with salary levels. So the irresponsible and/or ignorant Congressman can dispense a gift to government workers, pick up the political benefits now, and pass the cost on to some future Congress. The huge liability which has been thus fashioned since World War II is not yet like the national debt. It is a debt to people in the future, who will expect their monthly checks.

All these things make no sense to economists. But they can be silenced by attributing a national security benefit to the system somewhere, and they have dismally meager influence on pay matters anyway. Besides, economists only analyze whether or not a system provides *true* comparability. They are not much help in deciding what to think of the idea in the first place.

Reflections of Profit

Now that comparability has been achieved and promises to be maintained with yearly raises, perhaps time should be taken to ponder exactly what the cardinal principle of government pay means. It means that the United States accepts the salaries paid to workers by private businesses as a fair wage—and that the government will pay its employees no less, and no more. Comparability means that the nation, as well as the acquiescent employees, endorses the distribution of wealth between management and labor in private industry and pledges to reflect it.

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From this angle, the 10-year stream of union testimony in favor of comparability as an equitable standard of compensation seems more than a little strange. Why would a son of labor join hands with high-ranking personnel types—who were themselves spouting Restonisms about the insufficient distinctiveness afforded executive pay—and troop up to Congress sounding as if business had found the key to fair labor policy within the government? John Griner, the American Federation of Government Employees president, finds the question easy: "We have come a long way, and that last bill was a step toward the eventual collective bargaining of federal wages." Spokesmen in Congressman Udall's office agree. It was tactical, a step. And you can bet that the employee unions will move to squeeze every drop of pay for the tedium of those jobs at the lower levels, where no other joy but money abides. That would mean bargaining, but of course the whole economy seems to be bargained. That, in turn, would mean votes and power, and it might lead to another "wage compression" like the one that had the senior bureaucrats lathered up about 10 years ago.

The union strategy makes sense, at least. But the professional has a problem. Comparability robs public service of that sacrificial overtone, since it decrees that the public servant shall make as much, on average, as he would in an organization devoted only to cold profits. The professional has always felt a slight glow of moral superiority over the more avaricious hustlers out in the jungle. Now the federal employee achieves comparability and becomes a profit-monger like everyone on the outside. No more, no less, just average. So comparability turns the slight moral edge sour.

Things are actually worse than this. Consider the young man who came to Washington in 1966 to make a difference in the vital issues of poverty, hunger, and sickness—feeling scorn toward the profit-seeking world for having tolerated these things. He worked hard and did well, managing to move up from a grade 7 to a grade 13 job, where bright young people have a lot more to say about programs. What if you were that young person and you realized that your programs were not going to really help any poor, hungry, or sick people that much? What if you also realized that your salary had more than doubled in four years, that you were now making $17,761 a year, plus full fringe benefits, and the world's most amazing retirement program? What if you knew that you would receive an annual comparability increase, even though you were merely continuing to become faithfully tired every day? What if you suddenly realized that your pay increase was not only taking funds which might otherwise be given to poor people but that it was helping to create an inflation that sizzled those same poor people most mercilessly of all—and that if the poor child in your program did make it, he would have to figure out some way to pay your pension?

These thoughts would be unsettling. You might even conclude, with Pogo, that "we have met the enemy and they are us." You might decide that the personnel people are right, as usual, that there are no real distinctions between government and industry or between different jobs. Only between levels. Whether you are grinding out profits or carrying the torch for the poor is of little consequence. What counts is your level, which determines your distinction and your pay.

If you saw these things early enough—when you could afford to consider them personally—you would think about them. You might try to change some of the little things or even take on some of the big ones. If all else failed, you might have to desert your level—which means leaving any organization large enough to have levels—and step out where people are not suitable for the Bureau of Labor Statistics survey. ■

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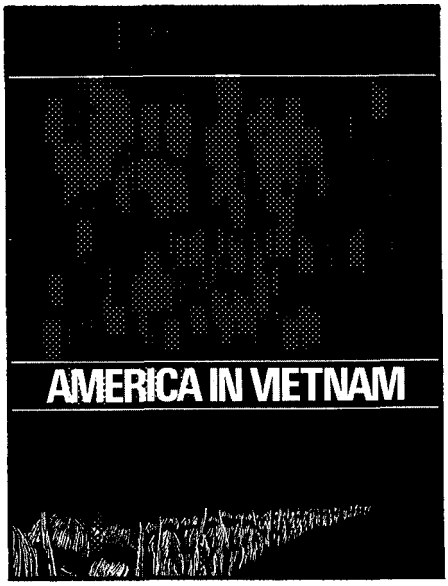

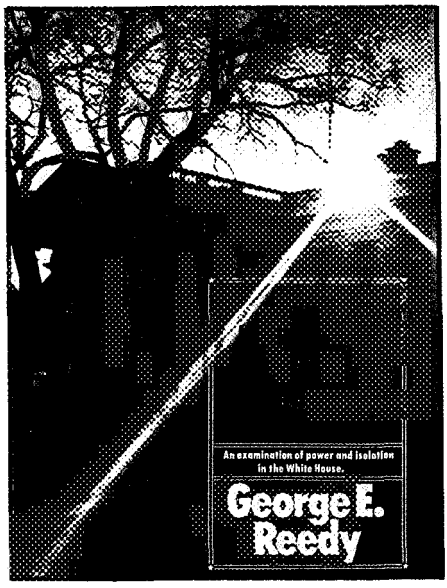

The award for 1970 goes to *The Lost Crusade* by Chester L. Cooper and *The Twilight of the Presidency* by George E. Reedy

Judges:
Townsend Hoopes Mary McGrory
Murray Kempton James C. Thomson, Jr.

Comments on the Cooper and Reedy books appear on pages 59 and 34, respectively.

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The Prince and His Courtiers: at the White House, the Kremlin, and the Reichschancellery

by Russell Baker and Charles Peters

The analogy between the modern presidency and the royal European court, bewigged, bejeweled, and beset with intrigue, is not original with George Reedy, but he is the first to alarm us with notice that court government is undergoing a 20th-century rebirth in the White House. This renaissance of the princely court, Reedy insists, is breeding immense danger for American government, for much the same reason that the 17th and 18th-century courts of Western Europe contributed to the development of violent revolutions.

In both France and England, our immediate political forebears, kings lost their heads because they had become unable to sense or hear the intent and passion of their peoples through the barriers of courts erected to glorify and, ironically, to protect them. Reedy suggests that the presidency is in somewhat the same danger, and for essentially the same reasons.

The President, needing "access to reality" in order to govern effectively, too often has access, instead, only to a self-serving court of flunkeys, knights, earls, and dukes in business suits, whose best chances of advancing their separate fortunes usually lie in diverting reality before it can reach the President. The result is a dangerous presidential isolation, which may be compounded in its peril because court life works to persuade the President that he is more closely in touch with reality than anyone else in the realm.

Thus, we had those repeated assertions from Lyndon Johnson that only the President had all the facts on which to base decisions about Vietnam, when in truth he lacked the first

Russell Baker writes the "Observer" column in The New York Times. *Charles Peters is editor of* The Washington Monthly.

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fact that was most essential of all for a leader and easiest to learn outside the White House court: to wit, that his people were not behind him as he waded deeper and deeper into the quagmire. This isolation from reality kept Johnson, and has since kept Richard Nixon, obsessed with Southeast Asia as a prime problem of government at a time when very few among the people could sustain more than a flickering interest in it, and then only when aroused by White House theatrics.

Reedy suggests that the presidency may be confronted, if not with the headsman or guillotinist, with an institutional arteriosclerosis no less fatal at a time when the interests of government seem increasingly alien to the interests of the governed.

When Reedy's book was first published, its importance as a work of political science was discounted by some reviewers on grounds that Reedy, as a member of the Johnson staff, had based his treatise on a singularly peculiar presidency, one in which parallels to the Sun King were ludicrously easy to draw.

Reedy's discussion of courtiers insulating the President against reality was taken by many readers as sour grapes, a subtle intellectual's way of taking his vengeance upon the cleverer players of the court game who had eased him into retirement. John Roche, who stayed with President Johnson's staff to the end, refers with mild contempt to the notion that presidential staff aides can seriously be likened to royal courtiers.

Members of the Kennedy circle—that strange, apparently indissoluble court in search of a king—contend that Johnson was, of course, susceptible to royal isolation by slick courtiers. But not their man, not Jack. The court analogy had no validity when applied to a President of superior competence.

And yet. . . . And yet. . . .

There were signs, not altogether superficial, that the development of something remarkably like court life had been rapidly accelerating at the White House since the arrival of Franklin Roosevelt. With Roosevelt, the presidency—for reasons not too difficult to understand in an era that was dotting the rest of the earth with strutting Caesars—entered a period of apotheosis. There had been strong presidents before, but now we were embarked on the time of the strong presidency, a time which is still with us.

The Trappings of Court

In sheer body density alone, the insulation around the presidency has thickened rapidly. Herbert Hoover had a staff of only 42 persons. A generation later, General Eisenhower, who prided himself on taut administration, had more than 2,000. Under Kennedy and Johnson, foreign-policy management groups were moved into the White House, and institutional divisions between domestic- and foreign-policy barons began to develop. In the Nixon White House, an expanding foreign policy dukedom has been established under Henry Kissinger with a staff of his own moving in independent orbit around Kissinger, who simultaneously maintains a great-lord's orbit around the President in the larger White House universe.

The trappings of court began, simultaneously, to multiply. The custom-built carriages, magnificently engineered automobiles built expressly for the White House. Great ocean-spanning jets kept constantly at the ready. Special helicopters. Presidential appearances were preceded and surrounded by the inevitable, ineffectual showing of the private presidential bodyguard. Security at the White House thickened. First, there were the gates through which ordinary mortals might not step. Inside, the lobbies swarmed with hangers-on, most especially the press, waiting for some emanation to filter out from the ruler burrowed deep behind offices occupied by gentlemen of ascending importance. The elite

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might have entree to the Oval Room, equivalent of the Royal Bedchamber. For the sub-elite there were certain Presence Chambers where the Presidential Magnificence might be seen in the flesh, might indeed grant the boon of a smile, of a casual "Hi, there!" to the fortunate. And there was the White House Mess, where the etiquette of who might eat at what table was of an intricacy that would surely have bemused Louis XIV.

American fears of monarchy at the head of government are familiar to schoolboys—the debate at the beginning about how the leader of the new country should be styled, the fears of the more republican founders that the President might develop into a king and that the seat of government might develop into a court.

These fears survived from memories of the abuses of the English court of the 17th and 18th centuries, at which people and Parliament were frequently dealt with according to the advice of some royal favorite, whose grasp of statecraft ended with a mastery of sycophancy. The most notoriously inept of the courtiers whimsically given power by kings was perhaps the Duke of Buckingham, who seems to have bewitched King James I with his male beauty and skills at flattery and royal companionship. Buckingham survived James to continue incompetent government into the reign of King Charles I. When Buckingham was eventually murdered, all England lit bonfires to honor his murderer. The experience of such government, repeated in differing degrees in the reigns of Charles II and James II and later under the Hanovers, was part of the intellectual heritage of the men who founded the Republic. Hence, the distaste for courts.

Reedy's thesis holds that the time the Founders feared may have arrived at last, unnoted under all the mock-serious political uproar about kings, tyrants, and courtiers that has been part of the currency of political campaigning throughout American history. Reedy, in fact, gives us a full-length portrait of the courtier's life at the modern presidential court.

And what is a courtier's life like at the White House? Why, surprising to tell, not terribly different from court life at the Reichschancellery in the reign of Adolf Hitler, where a courtier's life was surprisingly like life in the Kremlin, at the court of Josef Stalin.

Servility Becomes Endemic

By an extraordinary publishing coincidence, Reedy's memoir appears in the same year that Albert Speer and Nikita Khrushchev have given us their memoirs of life at the top in Germany and Russia.* Neither the Speer nor Khrushchev book concerns itself consciously with court life under Hitler and Stalin; yet, when they are read in context with Reedy, we are startled to discover that the styles of government being described by all three are remarkably alike.

At each court, for example, we find the leader, or prince, treated with a deference approaching reverence, which must inevitably tempt all but the humblest souls (who are rarely to be found running large aggressive states) to assume they possess a superiority bordering on divinity. In time, the man treated with such distinction begins to expect it as his due. The sycophantic Buckingham repeatedly signed his notes to the king, "Your faithful slave and dog," and James seems never to have told him that a friend's groveling was embarrassing to the king. Jack Valenti, who knew his man as well as anyone in Washington, knew that Lyndon Johnson would not bridle if Valenti told the world he slept better for knowing Johnson was in the White House. Princes, whether monarchist, fascist, communist, or

**The Twilight of the Presidency* by George E. Reedy—World Publishing, 197 pages, $6.95. *Inside the Third Reich*, Memoirs by Albert Speer—The Macmillan Company, 675 pages, $12.50. *Khrushchev Remembers* translated and edited by Strobe Talbott—Little, Brown and Company, 618 pages, $10.00.

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democratic, become accustomed to feeling like very special people.

Reedy writes of the White House:

> There is built into the presidency a series of devices that tend to remove the occupant of the Oval Room from all of the forces which require most men to rub up against the hard facts of life on a daily basis. The life of the White House is the life of a court. It is a structure designed for one purpose and one purpose only—to serve the material needs and the desires of a single man. . . .
>
> He is treated with all the reverence due a monarch. No one interrupts presidential contemplation for anything less than a major catastrophe somewhere on the globe. No one speaks to him unless spoken to first. No one ever invites him to "go soak your head" when his demands become petulant and unreasonable.

Speer found a smiliar condition under Hitler. He writes:

> There is a special trap for every holder of power. . . . His favor is so desirable to his subordinates that they will sue for it by every means possible. Servility becomes endemic among his entourage, who compete among themselves in their show of devotion. This exercises a sway over the ruler who becomes corrupted in turn.

And in Moscow, at about the same time Speer and colleagues were competing to persuade the Fuehrer of his surpassing excellence, Khrushchev and comrades in Moscow were busily laboring to show Stalin that there was no duty more vital for them than humoring his whims. At the end of a brutally exhausting day, Khrushchev recalls:

> We would meet either in his study at the Kremlin or, more often, in the Kremlin movie theater. Stalin used to select the movies himself. . . . When a movie ended, Stalin would suggest, "Well, let's go get something to eat, why don't we?" By now it was usually one or two o'clock in the morning. It was time to go to bed. . . . But everyone would say, yes, he was hungry, too. This lie was like a reflex. We would all get into our cars and drive to the dacha.

Uncomfortable Truths

The prince, having become accustomed through the assurances of the courtiers to the sensation of being an extraordinary human being, becomes more difficult to deal with at certain times. One such time is the moment when an uncomfortable truth is delivered at the palace door. A courtier's first instinct is to protect the prince, and there are rationalizations for doing so in the unwritten court protocols, as Reedy notes:

> It is felt that this man is grappling with problems of such tremendous consequence that every effort must be made to relieve him of the irritations that vex the average citizen.

It vexes the average citizen, fully aware of his own incompetence, to be forced to dwell upon the fact that in life, things frequently don't work out. Imagine, then, the difficulty of having to confront a prince, conditioned to believe in his peculiarly excellent superiority, with the fact that his policy is failing. There must be many of Lyndon Johnson's dukes and earls who, remembering the Vietnam years, would find it possible to sympathize with Hermann Goering's lines in an anecdote related by Speer.

About to board his train to leave Berlin, Goering was visited by General Adolf Galland. Goering took the occasion to reprimand Galland for having told Hitler that American fighter planes had penetrated German territory. Galland said they would soon be flying even deeper into Germany. "Fantasies!" Goering said. Galland said American fighters had already been shot down at Aachen. "Impossible!" said Goering. And yet, Galland insisted, the downed planes were at Aachen.

> Goering finally declared: "What must have happened is that they were shot down much farther to the west. I mean, if they were very high when they were shot down they could have glided quite a distance farther before they crashed."
>
> Not a muscle moved in Galland's face. "Glided to the east, sir? If my plane were shot up. . . ."
>
> "Now then, Herr Galland," Goering fulminated, trying to put an end to the debate, "I officially assert that the American fighter planes did not reach Aachen."

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The General ventured a last statement. "But, sir, they were there!"

At this point Goering's self-control gave way. "I herewith give you an official order that they weren't there! Do you understand? The American fighters were not there! Get that! I intend to report that to the Fuehrer."

It can't happen here? After the Sontay raid failed to discover a single American prisoner of war, much less rescue one, Secretary of Defense Laird went to the White House. What was this? A failure? Not at all, Laird explained. It had been a triumph for American intelligence.

Communism occasionally has the bad news problem, too; and apparently deals with it just as fascists and democrats do.

Khrushchev tells a story that had been told to him by Mikoyan. Demchenko, a member of the Ukrainian Politburo, called on Mikoyan in Moscow.

Here's what Demchenko said: "Anastas Ivanovich, does Comrade Stalin—for that matter, does anyone in the Politburo—know what's happening in the Ukraine? A train recently pulled into Kiev loaded with corpses of people who had starved to death. It had picked up corpses all the way from Poltava to Kiev. I think somebody had better inform Stalin about this situation.

You can see what an abnormal state of affairs had developed when someone like Demchenko, a member of the Ukrainian Politboro, was afraid to go see Stalin himself.

Actually, according to the evidence of our three memoirists, it wasn't abnormal at all. Rather than disturb the prince by becoming the delivery agent for bad news, and thus perhaps lose favor, the courtier elects to withhold from him information essential to realistic policy decisions. Or, to put it more bluntly, his own interests are placed above the interests of the prince and the state he professes to serve.

Experienced courtsmen may find it naive that anyone should expect them to behave otherwise. The rationale has been finely worked out; it has been articulated many times by men ex-

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plaining why they chose not to voice their dissent from the Johnson war policy. Open dissent ends one's chance to exercise his benign influence within the government, and creates job openings to be filled by less high-minded men. In brief, he who runs away shall live to run away another day.

The Keys to the Kingdom

Reedy, Khrushchev, and Speer give us comparable pictures of the advancing corruption created in the courtiers by their impulse to establish and protect their intimacy with the leader.

The White House assistants, writes Reedy, constitute "the greatest of all barriers to presidential access to reality." For them:

> . . . there is only one fixed goal in life. It is somehow to gain and maintain access to the President. This is a process which resembles nothing else known in the world except possibly the Japanese game of *go*, a contest in which there are very few fixed rules and the playing consists of laying down alternating counters in patterns that permit flexibility but seek to deny that flexibility to the opponent. The success of the player depends upon the whim of the President. Consequently, the President's psychology is studied minutely, and a working day in the White House is marked by innumerable probes to determine which routes to the Oval Room are open and which end in a blind alley.

This world sounds remarkably like the court of King James I, at which the Catholic faction, finding the King between favorites and knowing his weakness for handsome young men, kept thrusting a lovely young man of their choosing across the King's path, in hopes of obtaining the keys to the kingdom.

In Johnson's White House, the technique at least must have been rather duller. The basic method, Reedy reports, was "to be present either personally or by a proxy piece of paper when 'good news' arrives and to be certain that someone else is present when the news is bad."

Speer found precisely the same principle at work around Hitler. Writing of Martin Bormann, his *bête noire*, he states:

> Bormann followed the simple principle of always remaining in closest proximity to the source of all grace and favor. He accompanied Hitler to the Berghof and on trips, and in the Chancellery never left his side until Hitler went to bed in the early morning hours. . . .
>
> The powerful men under Hitler were already jealously watching one another like so many pretenders to the throne. Quite early there were struggles for position among Goebbels, Goering, Rosenberg, Ley, Himmler, Ribbentrop, and Hess. . . . But none of them recognized a threat in the shape of trusty Bormann. He had succeeded in representing himself as insignificant while imperceptibly building up his bastions.

"To be close to Stalin," Khrushchev remembers, "this seemed to be the crowning moment of my career."

And elsewhere, "I believed that everything Stalin said in the name of the party was inspired by genius, and that I had only to apply it to my own life." As this comment suggests, the courtier may, at some early stage in the relationship, develop such a psychological identity with his particular prince that he will abandon his own judgment and, like a lover, submerge his identity in that of the prince. The sweet delirium of ecstasy is produced when the prince returns the worship with some small gesture of recognition.

"For me to speak with the idol of a nation," writes Speer, "to discuss building plans with him, sit beside him in the theater, or eat ravioli with him in the Osteria" was simply "overwhelming."

"Now I was completely under Hitler's spell, unreservedly and unthinkingly held by him. I was ready to follow him anywhere."

On occasion, when Speer would greet Hitler with, "Heil, Mein Fuehrer!" Hitler would reply with, "Heil, Speer!" At such moments, Speer recalls, he felt "as if a medal had been conferred upon me. . . . All the intrigues and struggles for power were directed toward eliciting such a word, or what it stood for."

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Yes Mr. President, I Agree

Receiving the recognition and approval of the leader becomes a pleasure so powerful that the strongest of courtiers find it difficult to deny themselves. The empty-headed thrills which the younger Khrushchev and Speer derived from the notice of their leaders may be dismissed as the natural response of innocence in the presence of a celebrity. But what are we to make of the account of a National Security Council meeting under Lyndon Johnson, as recounted by Chester Cooper in *The Lost Crusade*? Cooper writes:

> The President, in due course, would announce his decision and then poll everyone in the room—Council members, their assistants, and members of the White House and NSC staffs. "Mr. Secretary, do you agree with the decision?" "Yes, Mr. President." "Mr. X, do you agree?" "I agree, Mr. President." During the process I would frequently fall into a Walter Mitty-like fantasy: When my turn came I would rise to my feet slowly, look around the room and then directly at the President, and say very quietly and emphatically, "Mr. President, gentlemen, I most definitely do *not* agree." But I was removed from my trance when I heard the President's voice saying, "Mr. Cooper, do you agree?" And out would come a "Yes, Mr. President, I agree."

The courtier's need to please his leader often has disastrous consequences for the people on the other end of royal decisions. When the Russians surrounded Hitler's Sixth Army at Stalingrad, at a critical moment in World War II, a black reality began to threaten the Fuehrer's notion that the Wehrmacht could not be defeated. At the timid suggestion of a general, he was even considering an effort to save the Army by breaking out into a retreat until Reichsmarshal Goering entered the room:

> Depressed, with a beseeching note in his voice, Hitler asked him: "What about supplying Stalingrad by air?" Goering snapped to attention and declared solemnly: "My leader! I personally guarantee the supplying of Stalingrad by air. You can rely on that."

His delusion of invincibility thus restored, Hitler would hear no more talk of retreat. He ordered the Sixth Army to stay and fight it out in Stalingrad, where it slowly faced extinction when Goering's promise proved totally fabricated—as everyone on the General Staff knew it would. Finally, a group of generals persuaded Chief of Staff Keitel to recommend to Hitler an evacuation of the Army's helpless survivors. It was the only sane thing to do, and Keitel promised that he would. The courtier's instinct, however, overwhelmed him at the critical moment, as Speer recounts:

> But at the situation conference, when Hitler once again stressed the necessity of holding out in Stalingrad, Keitel strode emotionally toward him, pointed to the map, where a small remnant of the city was surrounded by thick red rings, and declared: "Mein Fuehrer, we will hold that!"

It is enough to make one sympathize with a tyrant, for the determination of his courtiers to deceive him for their own personal ends—if he is aware of it—confronts him with problems as baffling as those posed by an enemy state's diplomacy.

Rarely is combat among the courtiers pursued to much political purpose in these 20th-century courts. Old scores are settled. There is intrigue, jealousy. One may win prerogatives that can be gloated upon. There is the satisfaction of public recognition, of being written about with awe in the press, and other small chaff. On great issues, however, the court is rarely a court in the Elizabethan sense, but rather more like that self-applauding cheering section which modern American politicians like to call a "team." Members are permitted to work out personal rivalries behind the arras, but on issues of substance every man must shape up, and work with the team.

With court struggle fought out along petty personal lines, the courtiers are inevitably reduced to demeaning little maneuvers to protect their backs, while working into good knife position vis-à-vis their immediate

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opponents.

Bormann, Speer recalls, avoided long business trips and vacations for fear another would insinuate himself during the absence into Bormann's place. "The man with the hedge clippers," Speer calls Bormann. "He was forever using all his energy, cunning, and brutality to prevent anyone from rising above a certain level."

Speer himself was not without skill at the struggle. Hitler often explained the elimination of important men on grounds that they were in ill health. Politicans, therefore, "pricked up their ears" when they heard of Hitler's associates being "sick." And so, to keep his profile discreetly low, Speer, even when he became "really sick," deemed it "advisable to remain as active as possible."

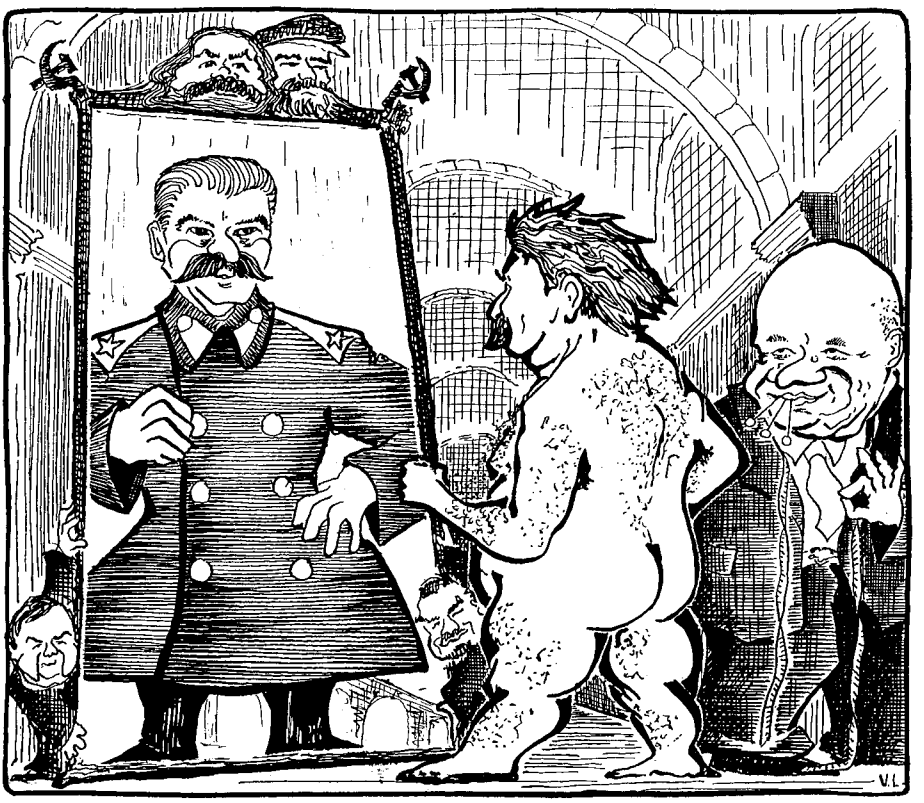
Khrushchev, referring to personal competition for favor in the Kremlin, describes Stalin's men as "tearing at each other's throats." Indeed, as his version of the Beria story reveals, Khrushchev himself, by the time of Stalin's death, had become superbly adept at tearing throats.

"The life of a courtier," Reedy comments, "is to be Sammy Glick or to fight Sammy Glick."

Kennedy and O'Donnell

This composite portrait of the new courts which seem to flourish around great political power in our century explains a great deal about why things go wrong in modern governments. The court imbues the prince with both religious and nationalistic characteristics that make him a figure of awe. ("I support the President," Americans will say, on most issues in which they have no immediate financial or blood interest. It is closely akin to saying, "I support the flag.")

The courtiers tend to identify the prince with the state. ("What is good for Josef Stalin is good for the Soviet Union," to paraphrase the young Khrushchev in American.) To help the state, the courtier must reach a posi-



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tion of intimacy with the prince, and to do this he must block or eliminate other courtiers moving toward the same goal. Above all, he must please the prince. And a prince who has been conditioned to consider himself a quasi-divine blend of flag, cause, and country is most unlikely to be pleased at being exposed too frequently to reality.

The danger becomes obvious, and Reedy has stated it. Our leaders, whatever their ideology, may very possibly be out of touch with the world that the rest of us live in. That hostile grille fence which keeps us away from the White House has two sides. The other seals off the President from the country he thinks he is governing.

As all this suggests, the courtier-prince relationship is almost inevitably corrupting to both parties. Consider the relationship of John Kennedy and one of his finest courtiers, Kenneth O'Donnell. In his memoirs published last year in *Life*, O'Donnell stated that Kennedy planned in 1963 to end the Vietnam war in 1965, after his reelection had been assured. O'Donnell, with his courtier's tendency to identify prince with state and place the welfare of ruler above all, saw nothing morally wrong, and to this day apparently fails to see anything out of order, with Kennedy's willingness to let men continue dying through 1963 and 1964 because it was politically awkward to end the war before assuring his own reelection.

What motivates the courtier? Money has something to do with it. Throughout history, the non-rich have tended to seek the patronage and protection of the rich. But money is far from the whole story. Another factor is the need to function, the opportunity the courtier gets to use his talents, to prove his mastery of special skills. Men wielding the pen or the brush naturally gravitate to the castle. Italian artists, for example, were given liberal use of church walls and domes to turn their talents to issues of ethereal importance in return for ignoring the rapacity and decadence of the princes who gave them their chance. Likewise, Albert Speer was able to blur away Hitler's final solution for the Jews as he focused on his own job performance. "I often ask myself what I would have done if I had recognized Hitler's real face and the true nature of the regime he had established," Speer said. "The answer was . . . my position as Hitler's architect had become indispensable. . . . I was in accord with the system so long as it permitted me to function effectively."

But the need to function is not the whole story, either. Note that Speer did not say "my position as architect," but rather, "my position as *Hitler's* architect" (our emphasis). This is finally what is most depressing of all: the compulsion of men to seek their identities in the gaudier identity of someone they perceive to be greater than they. It is the religious impulse perverted so that one's allegiance is to LBJ rather than to an idea of what the President should be.

The Prince-Substitute

Of course, most of us do not have a real prince to have faith in. We have evolved something like a prince-substitute, however, in the governmental and corporate bureaucracies, the universities, organized labor, foundations, with which so many of us are so unhappily familiar. Here we see working most of the same principles which animate life at the great political courts. Speer's willingness to overlook Hitler's mass murders as irrelevant to his specialty is similar to Khrushchev's position on Stalin's purges, as Khrushchev recalls:

> A list was put together of the people who should be exiled from the city. I don't know where these people were sent. I never asked. If you weren't told something, that meant it didn't concern you.

And although these examples are perhaps more dramatic, the attitudes are identical to those of today's corporate specialist—say the advertising men at General Motors, who didn't feel responsible for the unsafe cars produced

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by their company. Modern institutions remind us in other ways of the courts—the elevation of the organization to suprahuman importance, the minuet of the courtiers, the increasing difficulty of perceiving reality.

The universities, for example, are still puzzled about "what the kids really want." AT&T is still trying to figure out why it didn't anticipate a rising demand for phone service in New York. Penn Central executives are still amazed that there was no one around the office who knew how to run a railroad. The unions are irritated because blacks excluded from jobs by union policy accuse them of racism. And so on, and on, and on. The organization man has already become the characteristic man of our time, the man who shapes our destiny after the princes have finished reciting their ghost-written (by organization men) speeches.

A prophetic article in *The Observer* of London, written about Speer in 1944, is worth recalling, for what it says about our own time.

> Speer is, in a sense, more important for Germany today than Hitler, Himmler, Goering, Goebbels, or the generals. They all have, in a way, become the mere auxiliaries of the man who actually directs the giant power machine—charged with drawing from it the maximum effort under maximum strain. . . . In him is the very epitome of the "managerial revolution."
>
> Speer is not one of the flamboyant and picturesque Nazis. Whether he has any other than conventional political opinions at all is unknown. He might have joined any other political party which gave him a job and a career. He is very much the successful average man, well dressed, civil, noncorrupt, very middle class in his style of life, with a wife and six children. . . . [He] symbolizes a type which is becoming increasingly important in all belligerent countries: the pure technician, the classless bright young man without background, with no other original aim than to make his way in the world and no other means than his technical and managerial ability. It is the lack of psychological and spiritual ballast and the ease with which he handles the terrifying technical and organizational machinery of our age, which makes this slight type go extremely far nowadays . . . . This is their age; the Hitlers and Himmlers we may get rid of, but the Speers, whatever happens to this particular special man, will long be with us.

And so they are, the new courtiers, rising at their most efficient to heights where they seem very close to becoming the organization, but never quite. One day, we are surprised that the organization has sloughed off one brilliant young man and found another immediately to replace him.

In a thousand conference rooms, where the smell of moral sterility is as strong as ether in a hospital corridor, the new courtiers do their minuet each day and the organizations slip further and further from reality.

> How many of us [Reedy asks] have sat without protest through meetings where glorified nonentities expounded profound platitudes in the non-thought and the "innovative" non-proposal? How many of us have writhed in secret agony while "dedicated" mediocrities have responded with the organization man's version of Alleluia: "That grabs me. Run it up the flagpole and I'll salute it"?
>
> These obscenities have become the condition of life in the modern world—in business, in labor, in liberal and conservative organizations, in publishing, in education, and even in our churches. And when they reach government, where decisions are life and death for hundreds of millions of people, they reach the ultimate of the intolerable. . . .
>
> Somehow this thing must be made human again. Somehow we must learn to govern our people from an office that is secular and not from a court that is sanctified. If our destruction comes, it will be because we placed our faith—our unquestioning faith—in institutions that were only brick and wood and in men who were only flesh and blood and this seems to be the condition of the last half of the twentieth century.

Speer's personal lament may already apply to thousands who have never dreamed of Nazism and serve as epitaph for generations to come. "Years later, in Spandau," he writes, "I read Ernst Cassirer's comment on the men who of their own accord threw away man's highest privilege: to be an autonomous person.

"Now I was one of them." ■

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The Politics of Poetry

by Conor Cruise O'Brien

Did that play of mine send out certain men the English shot?

W. B. Yeats, when near to death, asked himself that question about his play *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, first performed in 1902 with Maud Gonne in the title role. The "certain men" were those who took part in the Rising of Easter, 1916, in Dublin.

In that Rising, a woman took a leading part; the metaphor is here not a dead one as you will see. The woman was Constance Countess Markiewicz, born Constance Gore-Booth. Constance was sentenced to death for her part in the Rising; later reprieved. We know that she recalled, out of that experience, Yeats' play, with its summons to totality of sacrifice and its promise of remembrance. His words of 14 years before were imprinted in her mind as "a sort of gospel."

We know that she was not the only one of her generation to be affected in this way by *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*. Another revolutionary who saw it, P. S. O'Hegarty, called it "a sort of sacrament." And a spectator who disapproved came away from a performance asking himself "if such plays should be produced unless one was prepared for people to go out to shoot and be shot."

To the question of the dying poet,

Did that play of mine send out certain men the English shot?

it seems that the probable answer is "Yes, it did."

What is the difference between the play *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* and the Rising of 1916? If participants in the "real life" action have taken in the "fiction" as a "gospel" or "sacrament," can we say flatly that one is "fiction" and the other "real life"?

If a participant, *remembering* the play, and remembering its conditional promise to be remembered forever, enacts the sacrifice demanded in the play, is she not in fact continuing the action of the play, in terms which are different, not in the sense that real life is different from fiction, but in the sense that the new action crosses a social and conventional threshold into illegality and violence?

It was legal for Maud Gonne to step onto a raised platform in a concert hall in Dublin, pretend that she was Ireland, and utter words which were a summons to violent action.

It was illegal for Constance Markiewicz to step into a park in Dublin,

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announce in effect that she was one of Ireland's children summoned by her to her flag—which was the language of the Easter Week Proclamation—and use firearms to defend the park and the flag against the same forces which Maud Gonne had symbolically defied.

The essential differences between the two transactions remain in the legal and technical orders. In terms of "reality" they are on the same footing, both real and symbolic. For of course the Dublin Rising of 1916, which presented no hope at all of military victory, was a symbolic sacrifice, deliberately designed so that its actors, like the men 1798 evoked in *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, should be "remembered forever," and so that their memory, like the play itself, should be an incitement to further sacrifices.

I have talked in Northern Ireland with certain men whose sole ambition it is to play such a role—in Constance's terms, not Maud's—and be among those who are remembered in this way. For these men, though they use political language, what is important is not a political objective; the idea that their professed political objective is almost certainly unattainable not only does not deter them, but does not even interest them much. What interests them is the identification with the role of the patriot rebel, and a need to be remembered in this role; the posthumous audience is important.

This is what gives meaning to their lives; it is their honor. And nothing can make their performance in the role memorable except the dimension of risk, up to the supreme sacrifice. Without this element it would all, as they think, be "play-acting"; with this element, it becomes "real."

Yet it is real, and it is also play-acting, at one and the same time—in that resembling also an action on the stage.

It would be a mistake, I think, to regard these phenomena as purely or especially "Irish," although it is true that subject peoples have somewhat more incentive than others to explore the possibilities of symbolic action, certain other forms of action being usually closed to them. In Sicily, the puppet theater helped to establish the conventions of the Mafia. But peoples can be "subject" in other ways than by nationality, and the history of dispossessed elements among dominant peoples shows elements comparable to the relation of *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* to Constance Markiewicz. The first night of Beaumarchais' *Mar-*

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riage of Figaro was an episode—a real episode—in the French Revolution, and the dialogue of Bazarov in Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* set the tone for more than one generation of Russian proto-revolutionaries. The plebeians are always, in some sense, rehearsing the uprising.

But it is not only in the revolutionary tradition that the stage and reality mingle. The play—including plays of so-called "real life"—can incite to violence, but it can also be a substitute for violence, a form of redirected activity. The United Nations is a theater for and of activity of this kind. Again and again, the stages of the Security Council and General Assembly have been used for symbolic representations, once or twice to legitimize the use of force, but much more often to sanctify its avoidance. In all cases the basic political decisions were taken elsewhere, but the United Nations was the scene for a spectacle making these decisions acceptable and, in a secular way, holy.

In the case of Korea, the Security Council chamber was the scene for a rite of sanctification, accompanying the American decisions to intervene. This rite was not, of course, strictly speaking, a Security Council decision at all; Article 27 of the Charter requires "the concurring votes of the permanent members" and one of these, the Soviet Union, was absent and did not concur. Legalities were, however, in practice unimportant; the spectacle mounted in the Security Council chamber was adequate for its purpose: symbolic drama of legitimation, propitiation, and reassurance, comparable to the pouring of a libation. This ceremony surely helped the American public to feel that Korea was a just war. A part of the uneasiness felt about Vietnam is that it has gone unblessed, since it is not possible, in contemporary conditions at the United Nations, to stage a ceremony analagous to that performed just after—not before—President Truman's decision to intervene in Korea.

Lady Macbeth at the UN

In the case of Hungary, the United States used the United Nations stage for a ritual drama with the reverse significance to the Korean one. The Eisenhower government, pledged though it was to "roll back the Iron Curtain," decided in fact not to come to the aid of the Hungarian rebels, but instead to present a cleansing and compensatory ritual drama at the United Nations. This depended, for much of its effect, on imprecise public recollections of the Korean performance. *Then* the Security Council had *acted,* in a real or literal sense, so the public thought. *Now,* in the case of Hungary, the Security Council "was powerless to act," because of the Soviet veto and because the Soviet representative was present this time. The spectacle of "the Security Council powerless to act," because paralyzed by the Russian veto, was in fact the *cleansing* scene in the ritual drama. It was cleansing by means of a scapegoat stricken with paralysis. Eisenhower and Dulles were freed of the guilt of allowing the Hungarians to be crushed; the United Nations bore that guilt. The *compensatory* scenes of the same drama were staged in the General Assembly: speeches and resolutions condemning the Soviet Union for its action in Hungary. The representatives of the United States could be seen and heard by huge television audiences, playing active and virtuous parts in these scenes. There can be no doubt that the availability of these dramatic resources made it easier for the Eisenhower government to resist, or rather to deflect, the pressure they heavily felt towards some form of intervention.

The men who planned the Anglo-French intervention at Suez, which coincided with the Hungarian Rising, had a scenario of their own. Selwyn Lloyd, Foreign Secretary in the Eden government, directed that the United Nations be used to set the stage for the intervention—the metaphor here is

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his own. Those who dramatize a version of politics are often quite conscious of what they are doing.

The British and French presented a resolution to the Security Council which they knew the Soviet Union would veto, and which the Soviet Union did in fact veto. The versatility of this form of drama is shown by the fact that the very same situation—"Security Council Paralyzed by the Veto"—which served Eisenhower and Dulles as a pretext for *not* intervening in Hungary, served Eden and Mollet as a preparation for *intervention* in Egypt on the theory that, having exhausted the recourse to the procedures of the Charter and having been denied peaceful redress, they had recovered their freedom of action. It was most unfortunate for them that their scenario clashed with the scenario selected by a greater power. The United States, which would certainly have used some equivalent of the Anglo-French scenario if it had decided on intervention in Hungary, necessarily found that scenario altogether unacceptable when, having decided on non-intervention, it found it convenient to claim that its hands were tied by its commitment to the Charter, and by the Soviet veto. Whatever Eisenhower and Dulles might in other circumstances have decided to do, or not to do, about the invasion of Egypt, their own self-scripted Hungarian role, in the autumn of 1956, made it mandatory on them to discredit the Anglo-French scenario since, if its credibility could be sustained, it would discredit their own. In my belief, this competition of scenarios and roles, within the same theater, accounts in a considerable degree for the vigor and promptitude with which the United States government brought the Anglo-French performance to its inglorious end.

The Western powers and in particular the United States have made the most use of the theatrical possibilities of the United Nations; no doubt because they have the greatest say in the management of the theater in question. But others have used it also. The Soviet Union used it, for example, in the Six-Day War crisis in a manner closely analogous to the compensatory scenes of the American scenario over Hungary. Their rhetoric committed them to some kind of support for the Arabs, and they convened the General Assembly in order to provide that support in theatrical rather than physical form. Again, in the Cuban missile crisis, Khrushchev used the United Nations in much the same way as that in which Eden had had to use it over Suez: he presented what was in fact a climb-down before America's power, as law-abiding acquiescence with a United Nations request, and he was seen by his own audience playing out a virtuous part.

Bad Acting is Better Than Truth

None of these performances was wholly satisfactory, but each of them was greatly preferable, from the point of view of those involved, to the

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Edited by MARTIN GREENBERGER

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ignominy of the naked truth. And in most cases the protection given to those involved was also a form of protection for those who watched, and whose danger might have been greater, if a stage and suitable roles had not been available for acting out a version of history different from that of the cabinet rooms and chanceries. Nor was it entirely a case of deceiving the public. If the public was deceived, it was often that it wished to be deceived. A wide public, which included perhaps most of us, wished to be honorably indignant about the Russian suppression of Hungary, but without running the risk of nuclear war. The minima of collective paralysis at the UN met the needs of this dilemma, in much the same way as somewhat similar symptoms in individuals are a way of responding to more directly personal emotional dilemmas. In both cases, we can plausibly infer the coming into play of a kind of survival mechanism. Yet mechanism is an inadequate word to convey the resourcefulness and spontaneity and versatility with which human beings—including such apparently relatively unimaginative human beings as Dulles and Eden—can respond to a simultaneous forked threat to survival and to dignity, by improvising in so many different ways a choreography of dignified retreat and evasion. The metaphor of art form fits more closely than the metaphor of mechanism. Art, as Edmund Burke said, is man's nature.

When Sancho Mocks Quixote

The boundary between what we call "art" and what we call "real life" is an illusion. Man's instinct for self-preservation, and his need for dignity, force him to be a theatrical animal. Since he could not survive without expedients which are often in fact undignified, he feels, and satisfies, the need for further expedients, dignifying the undignified. These expedients can be found in historiography, sermons, journalism, and popular balladry, but best of all in the dramatic form of the heroic theater, the most vivid of all ways of changing history with dignity. Man's dignity is his own invention, and life constantly forces him to reinvent it. The exaltation of Irish history in *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* brought a death sentence to Constance Markiewicz—as a corresponding exaltation among black people in this country, expressed in the drama of Le Roi Jones and others, may well have sent out "certain men the white man shot."

Tragedy may purge of pity and terror, perhaps. It certainly does not purge away, but rather strengthens, man's sense of dignity, if necessary, before survival. Comedy, on the other hand, mostly prefers survival to dignity. Laughter is an acceptance of the idea that life, even with loss of dignity, remains worth living. The curious dramatic forms of "real life" politics are often intermediate between comedy and tragedy. In conditions where peace is saved, the plot is near tragedy; that is, it had to come as near to tragedy as is felt to be compatible with survival. The demeanor of the participants is in the tragic mode, solemn and heroic; any injection of overt comedy would wreck the whole scenario. Yet the spirit at work is the comic spirit, preferring survival to dignity, but offering the public a simulation of dignity, which it knows will be gratefully accepted as the real thing. Sancho Panza plays Quixote, and tragedy is averted.

Truth is said to be the first casualty in time of war. But it is just as true to say that truth is a casualty whenever the peace is saved. In fact, literal truth is inadequate to human needs, either in peace or war. Man cannot live on ascertained facts alone; he has to make something up: a poem, a religion, a country, an ideology, something you can live with and live for. Curiosity, the need to find out the truth, is part of man's nature, but the truth may be too much to take, and the need to invent, to make up a

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story, is part of his nature, too. As man's capacity for self-destruction enormously increases, and as the vast increase in his numbers presents new and pressing threats to his individual dignity, so there are proportionate new demands on his ingenuity to find new ways both of surviving and of preserving dignity. The peace protest movements, from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament to the present anti-war demonstrations, were one set of responses to this dual need. These movements proceeded of course by essentially dramatic methods: acting out, confrontation, demonstration. The history of some participants in these movements reveals the tension in the interior of the dual demand for human dignity and for survival. Some who joined the peace movement out of a passion for human dignity moved away from pacifism to a cult of violence. Some workers for civil rights, for blacks in America or Catholics in Northern Ireland, having won considerable support and successes by the use of nonviolent methods in the teeth of violence by their adversaries, then swung round and adopted some variant of their adversaries' methods, thereby losing much of their original support.

A Sympathetic Audience

Dramatic politics, the politics of stylized confrontations, requires an audience that is itself split, or capable of being split—or actually more than one audience. Thus the activities of the civil rights movement in Dixie, and the spectacle of the reprisals which they endured, worked by appealing to an audience in the North. Similar activities in South Africa were a total failure because there was no equivalent of the American Northern audience. Similarly, the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland scored successes by appealing in effect to a *British* public, over the heads of the local Protestant rulers of Northern Ireland. But the renewed use of physical force of the Catholic Republicans in Northern Ireland, and of, say, the Black Panthers, now repels many of those through whose support the civil rights movement won its successes.

Theatrical metaphor pervades journalistic and general discussion of all public activities, including politics and especially high international politics. The expression "to play a part" is so common that we have ceased to be conscious of it as a theatrical metaphor. Expressions like "the chief actors," "the leading role," "the world stage" have lost significance by their sheer triteness. The word "role" has passed into a more specialized and relatively precise vocabulary, that of the social scientists, but again, I think, without retaining much metaphorical life or much feeling of its theatrical origin. The significance of the violence and persistence of theatrical metaphor, as a system of referring to public activities of all kinds, has been largely overlooked.

No Room for Doubt

One reason for not studying dramatized politics is political. Politically committed people will readily discern political dramatization as being among the resources with which adversaries deceive the public; they will often—not always—be reluctant to think of the theatrical as one of the dimensions of all politics, including their own. Governments and establishments have strong reasons for not favoring investigation into the political show business from which they have, by definition, profited. The Left, on the other hand, which one might think had an equivalent interest in dismantling at least establishment show business, has not shown anything like as much interest in this area as its importance seems to require. This lack of interest may perhaps be traced to two type-figures which have always existed on the Left: the puritan and the pedant. The puritan dislikes theater in itself and is unwilling to look at it, even critically; he finds it repulsively frivolous to see political life itself as theatrical, since

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politics is important, and the theater is not. The pedant, on the other hand, disdains all the surfaces of life; these are for the vulgar. Deep underlying causes are the thing for him. He is like a man who is so preoccupied with what he thinks may be going on behind the scenes, that he fails to notice what is actually happening on the stage and how it affects the audience.

But apart from political considerations, I suspect there may be more fundamental human reasons for not looking too seriously into this question. Our dignity is involved, not just the dignity of a few, but the dignity of all of us. There is a strong religious side to political drama, and dramatized politics. It was not for nothing that one spectator called *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* "a sort of gospel," and another "a sort of sacrament." This is not a frame of mind conducive or receptive to analysis or criticism. In the case of dramatized politics there is also, especially in moments of great danger, a strong wish to believe in the spectacle as real: identification with a national leader or spokesman represses any intimation that he may be playing a part in the theatrical sense. Even when it was proved—as it was for example in the case of Adlai Stevenson on the Bay of Pigs crisis—that an actor's lines belonged strictly to the world of fiction, a wide public wished to forget this and resented, and still resents, any reference to the fact, very much as a religious public may resent any reference to the exposure of a bogus miracle. It is not that the public any longer argues for the reality of the miracle; it is just that references to it wound the public in its essential piety, in its will to believe, and in its dignity.

Survival As an Art Form

It is also true that the working of such scenarios as I have described, not only in the United Nations but in the theater of domestic politics and in a wide variety of public transactions, depends on agreement to accept the scenario literally and on its own terms. Illusion—some degree of illusion at least—is a necessary part of how the thing really works; both the preservation of dignity and even survival may at times depend on illusion. Yet it would be wrong, I think, to conclude that because of this we should refrain from analysis of such scenarios, from trying to find the limits of literalness, the social functions of metaphor, and the versatile ambiguous feats of man the dramatist. It is in man's nature to pretend, but it is also in his nature to find out. There are gray areas too: sometimes he pretends to find out, sometimes he finds out more than he pretends. The acquiescence in certain political spectacles may perhaps fall short of literal credence—it may not be so very different from that suspension of disbelief which we are thought to accord in the theater. It may even be that, as against all the resistances I have mentioned, there is now developing, for survival's sake, a greater wish to understand how these matters work. The politics of confrontation, sketchy though they usually are, have forced the dramatic element in politics into the public consciousness. If we are to succeed in living together, in what will for a long time be increasingly and frighteningly crowded conditions, we shall need to develop gestures that require no great elbowroom. It is not so much that there will be a greater need for the symbolic element in politics, but that this element will need to become more economic and more refined. This will require, I believe, in the public generally, a more conscious *general* recognition of the symbolic element, certainly a readiness to take it seriously but no longer quite so literally—a development analogous to the Reformation. There are some signs that this may already be happening in Japan.

More narrowly, among students of human behavior there should, I think, be a growing recognition that art, as well as science, has light to throw on these matters and that the practice of

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forms of art, and of the dramatic form in particular, is by no means confined to the small category of those whom we usually classify as artist. Yeats suspected that even political passion was "no more than the desire to be an artist." There is a certain artistic arrogance in that formulation, but it contains a sound intuition, analogous to Burke's about art's being man's nature. Burke meant that it was in man's nature to be ingeniously creative, flowering in scientific achievement and in political institutions but also in art in our modern sense. The fact that I have had to use 20 words to say what Burke said in four—and not merely through my own ineptitude or prolixity but because Burke's saying is no longer readily intelligible—this small fact is a clue to what has been lost in a process of specialization, over a period of less than two centuries. Because, if what Burke says about man is true and if we have lost the ability to say it briefly, pithily, and intelligibly, then we are further from a sense of our identity than we were in his time. He foresaw that we might be.

The challenges of the period we are now entering are making man devote more of his dangerous "art" to the study of his dangerous nature. It may be, of course, that, because of the very identity which Burke asserted, our nature is what our art sees fit to discover; that is, it may be in our nature to deceive ourselves. The artist, as Nietzsche said, is a liar. We do not need, however, to understand ourselves *fully*; perhaps we need, rather, not to do so. We just need to understand ourselves well enough to make possible survival, with a certain minimum of dignity for the survivors. Such a condition seems within reach, although how much pain and destruction will be incurred on the path to its attainment we cannot know. But it seems possible that by a fuller understanding of the odd devices by which we act out in public a version of our problems and our natural woes, we might be able to make that path a little less difficult and dangerous. ■

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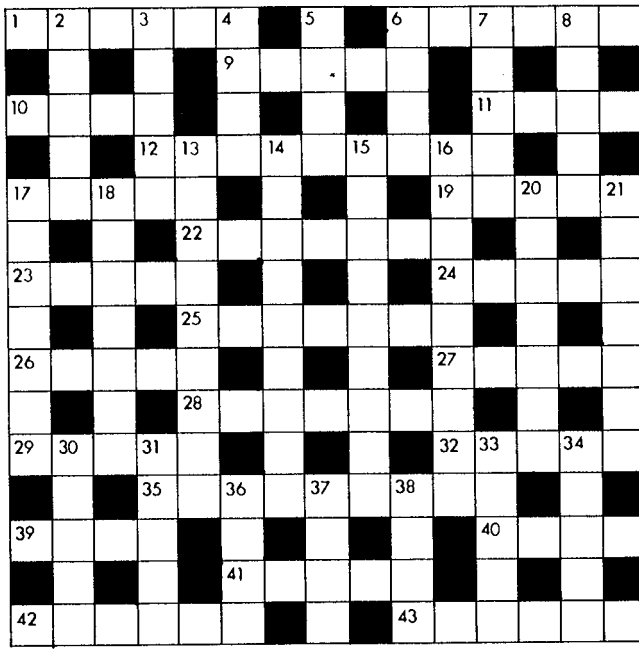
The Political Puzzle

by John Barclay



Across

1. These are armed with a hundred in links' cries. (6)
6. Familiar with the West Indies. (6)
9. Turnover results in coup ending one day later. (5)
10. Magazine costs more than a mite. (4)
11. In the same place as my bridge action. (4)
12. John, Dick, and Harry are three of the last five to be this. (9)
17. Use pen in France a little. (2, 3)
19. Travelers see a hero in Chicago. (5)
22. Nobody likes manna to eat these days.(3, 1, 3)
23. Kinds of right in danger. (5)
24. Weariness shows in nineteen nuisances. (5)
25. Destroyer of slang caught in act. (1, 3, 3)
26. It's no use to eye lava. (5)
27. Sample at set times. (5)
28. Axe into smallest possible cab force. (3, 4)
29. This is not, or should not be, an aim in life. (2, 3)
32. Sounds like more than one letter would vex. (5)
35. Martin's family. (9)
37. He wasn't caught short by Teddy. (4)
40. This can be Scotch or red. (4)
41. A look in Nixon's mirror finds him ageless. (5)
42. Consolidated, then what? (6)
43. The sight of these too often repels. (6)

Down

2. Tear-jerker goes on and on with me in the middle. (5)
3. Delicacy served by Nez Percé indians. (5)
4. Tries a ruse to make certain. (4)
5. Partly found in wise mixture. (4)
6. He lied, but it's useless to complain. (4)
7. Muskie's senior. (5)
8. This rider stays out of 36 down. (5)
13. Ellen nags our mother and leaves. (4, 5)
14. Newcomer got things going at trio's fete. (3, 4, 2)
15. They produce endless star comedy upside down. (9)
16. Dull newcomer hangs on ten tiny fingers. (9)
17. Brash newcomer put rats in desk drawer. (7)
18. Maybe newcomer can shape P.R. program. (7)
20. Forgetting you have the same in a tan shade. (7)
21. Sexless film from good direction following epic. (7)
30. Double zero lays an egg. (5)
31. Villains go as I did. (5)
33. Poets may legally block the way. (5)
34. Kind of bowl or highway. (5)
36. It should not be so dry in Iran. (4)
37. How a ten-whisky man likes his. (4)
38. Ship bottom down is 2 down up. (4)

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g., (2, 3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g., USA, are treated as one word. Answers to last month's puzzle are on page 16.

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"Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."
—Shelley

A Congressional Garden of Verse

by Paul Dickson

As a literary magazine, the *Congressional Record* is a much more experimental, avant-garde journal than its famous competitors like the *Transatlantic* or *Partisan Reviews*. While many poetry magazines claim they are devoted to freedom and openness and then turn around and feed their readers the same kind of verse month after month, the *Record* accepts everything from epic works to medieval thulas and even Haiku-like exercises. Every copy of the *Record* contains three or four poems of varying styles introduced by admiring Congressmen. (Since the House inserts more poetry than the Senate, it brings into doubt the contention that the Senate is the higher-minded body.)

The *Record* School of Poetry tends to attract people who write because they are impassioned rather than because they might get paid or invited to a George Plimpton party, and this purity of motive gives their collective work a diversity and intensity that eludes other anthologies. And while poets of the *Record* School may not be well-recognized like Robert Lowell, their behind-the-scenes spiritual lobbying power is unsurpassed. *Record* poet laureate E. Merrill Root, for instance, bends the ear of Hon. John Rarick and other important Congressmen on many occasions. What he loses in notoriety he gains in influ-

Paul Dickson, a frequent contributor to The Washington Monthly, *is author of a book on think-tanks, to be published this year by Atheneum.*

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ence. Root has much more ability to inspire the right people than Shelley, even though Shelley thought of poets as unacknowledged legislators. Many *Record* poets haven't even heard of Shelley.

Record poems rely on enthusiasm rather than allegory. Instead of going on for pages of metaphorical gimmicks and confusing the reader, leaving him with the headaches of verbal gerrymandering, a *Record* poet is likely to say what he means and get out. A typical example is "A Mother's Prayer," offered by a woman in Creve Coeur, Illinois, and brought to the attention of the nation by Congressman Jimmy Quillen of Tennessee, which contains this stanza:

This is our Commie aim,
To bring our America to shame.
Marchers and protesters have done well,
As far as I'm concerned, they can go to hell.

This direct no-nonsense approach, straight poetry, characterizes the School. The simple two-line rhyming couplets, which Shakespeare found a good vehicle for his sonnets but which have been largely discarded by the popular modern poets, are frequently employed by *Record* poets who reject stylistic rebellion for its own sake and concentrate instead on the message of the poem. The possibilities for the couplet are far from exhausted, as evidenced by this stanza from "The Great Society," penned by a Waverly, Iowa, poet and introduced into the *Record* by Congressman H. R. Gross of that state:

To help the poor, there's OEO
It pays a few some fancy dough
But alot of cash has disappeared
In ways mysterious and wierd.

The reversed word order of the last line, "in ways mysterious and wierd," illustrates how *Record* poets experiment within traditional forms to achieve a desired literary effect. Another example of this occurs in "Something to Remember Us By," dedicated to Congressman Del Clawson of California by a constituent, which lulls the reader with rather pedestrian rhyme schemes and then surprises him out of his apathy with:

Is Russia now considered friend or foe?
What can we expect from Chi Minh Ho?

Record poets use such devices to grapple with social questions that more well-known bards have either been unwilling or unable to confront directly, who have snuck around issues or tried to get out of taking a stand through vague generalities and illusions and incursions into whimsy. This weakness is not apparent in many *Record* poems, especially those of the epic genre, as "American Hard Hats" by E. Merrill Root shows us. "American Hard Hats" brings the monumental struggle of a Faerie Queen and a Paradise Lost to the streets of New York without obscuring the central message, and the results were deemed "inspirational" by Rep. Rarick, who introduced the poem. It opens by describing the two sides who will do battle:

Mass-produced Robinson Carusos [sic] *on a binge,*
Shaggy and rank as Caruso's goats, life's fringe
Of impotence, they froth and seethe and shriek
Obscenities that fairly drip and reek.

In the other corner stand:

Men, men *at last, the resolute Hard Hats come*
Like Charlemagne's Paladins of Millenium.

The ensuing battle is long, but the victory is decisive:

Like rivers from high mountains, cold and pure,
They cleanse the street of human caricature,
Filth and pollution. From the heights, a flood
And spate of nature rolls in hardihood.
The sidewalks of New York, in glory, are
Once more a portion of America.

Besides the epic verse, another poetic genre of frequent use by the *Record* School is the thula, or metrical name list. The thula, popularized in the Middle Ages as a way of remembering things such as names, dates, and important events, has been adopt-

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ed by those who want to remember what America used to be like. Last summer, California poetry patron Del Clawson read into the *Record* "You're Old Enough to Remember the Real America If You Can Remember," which starts:

When you never dreamed our country could ever lose.
When you left the front door open.
When people knew what the Fourth of July stood for.
When you took it for granted that women, the elderly, and the clergy were to be respected.
When a girl was a girl.
When a boy was a boy.
When you didn't feel embarrassed to say that this was the best darn country in the world.
When socialist was a dirty word.

This form can be equally effective in describing what people don't want to remember about America, and this variation is more prevalent in the *Record* than the nostalgic "When" poems. Two examples are "A Tired American Gets Angry," rescued from the obscurity of the Luverne, Minnesota, *Star-Herald* where it first appeared, by Congressman Joel T. Broyhill, and "I Am Sick," made famous by Congressman James A. McClure of Idaho, who renamed it "The Theme Song of the Silent Majority." These two poems rely on a slow-burning fuse effect—where you imagine the author of "When" sighing and putting down his pen at the end of the poem, you can see the latter two poets grinding their nibs into the formica. Anyway, here are stanzas from "I Am a Tired American" and the companion, "I Am Sick."

I am a "tired American."
I'm tired of being called the Ugly American
I'm tired of having the world panhandlers use my country as a whipping boy 365 days a year.
I am a "tired American"—tired of having American embassies and information centers stoned, burned and sacked by mobs operating under orders from dictators who preach "peace" and breed conflict.

I am sick of commentators and columnists canonizing anarchists, revolutionists and criminal rapists but condemning law enforcement if it brings such criminals to justice.
I am sick of reading so-called modern literature with its kinship to what I used to read on the walls of public toilets.

These poems demonstrate the general ability of *Record* poets to reduce their reliance on rhyme and meter as their ire is heightened. Thus while the poet gets madder, he also gets less lyrical, a technique which serves to focus the reader's attention more fully on the problem at hand.

While the shopping list poems have the depressing effect of summarizing the woes of the land all in one place, many *Record* poets respond to single issues growing out of the crisis of the moment. Vietnam, for instance, has held a preeminent place as a recent poetic topic and, while some of the poems are written by soldiers now on active duty, more are written by veterans of other wars. A typical work, entitled "Poem to Protesters," was introduced last summer by Congressman Albert Johnson of Pennsylvania:

Well, if some day we're bombed in war
And their sons are called to go,
They'll look the other way and say,
"Well son I didn't know."
"I didn't know that the reds would come
And hit our motherland.
I didn't know that you'd have to die
In California's sand."

Another work, entitled "Unnecessarily Dead," was offered in the debate on alleged war atrocities during early 1970 by Rep. Broyhill. The poem tells the story of a soldier who sees a child in a battle zone and hesitates to shoot him ("He remembered other incidents and GI's now on trial," the poem explains) with the result:

The grenade landed at his feet
The explosion he did not feel
His god he has come to meet
For a child he did not kill.

As Vietnam wanes, ecology is becoming a major topic for the *Record* School, with the rhythmic debate just picking up. Last July Congressman Richard T. Hanna of California offered the poem "I Smell America

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Smelling," which draws heavily on the literary tradition of Walt Whitman:

I smell America smelling, the varied odors I smell,
Those of exhaust pipes, each one belching fumes as it should belch, blue and fierce.

The work goes on to list every noxious effluent known to man. A few days later, SST-buff Olin E. Teague of Texas parried with an "Ode to the Pseudo-Ecologist":

To the dedicated men with ants in their pants
That would turn the clock backward without a forward glance.

Then there are the poems which quickly crop up after a significant national event. The moon landing, for instance, brought forth scores of verse. Most of these are of a bold and heroic caste, typically opening with a gusty exclamation like "Ho!" or "Lo!"—"Ho! The Sea of Tranquility" one starts. Moreover, most of these works rely throughout on the "poetic shout," a characteristic of the more exultant *Record* troubadours who boldly scatter exclamation points through their works where timid muses would insert commas. "Hail! Armstrong, Aldrin, Collins, Heroes all!" is just one of many lines in such works where two points of exclamation guarantee the reader's going in and out of the line shouting all the way. Other moon poems, however, are less heroic and more colloquial in tone. A prime example in this category is "Ohio's Place on the Moon," the contribution of a Wilberforce, Ohio, man who traces the Buckeye contribution to astronautics from Kitty Hawk to the moon and winds up exhorting Ohio on to Mars.

But the minute one suspects that the *Record* School is pandering to the fad, the current, and the superficial, you find a work that reflects a long-standing tradition, a thought that transcends the petty feuds of the day. Such works are often introduced by Congressman F. Edward Hébert of Louisiana, who presents leveling tomes on such subjects as Christmas and the glories of the Southland. One recent poem, sent to Hébert by a constituent, was "Louisiana," a four-stanza poem which Hébert put in the *Record* with considerable pride. The penultimate stanza goes like this:

Oh! Come to Louisiana
Where magnolias cast a light
On colored folk with banjos
As they sing and dance all night.

The flag, motherhood, the good old days, eulogies to recently departed Congressmen (who are invariably "striding 'cross Elysian Fields" after first having answered their most important roll call) and the glories of states provide the most common subjects for *Record* poems of the Hebertian style.

While the *Record* contains such great variety of topics and styles, it is unfair to conclude that Congressmen have no powers of critical discrimination as far as poetry is concerned. Last March, for example, a particular federally-subsidized poem was brought to the attention of the House and was so unsettling to the usual *Record* poetry patrons that it was still being discussed and despaired over in September. The poem in question was written by Aram Saroyan, son of William, and it goes like this:

lighght.

That is the poem in its entirety. What bothered Congressmen was that it was awarded $750 in federal funds—or as William J. Scherle of Iowa pointed out, young Saroyan was paid $107.14 per letter for his offering.

The poets of the *Record* School would say that "lighght" is a good example of what happens to poetry when it is federally funded—not unlike what has happened to everything else that is federally funded. It doesn't make any sense and it wastes the taxpayers' money. The *Record* poets write tomes that are both understandable and free of charge.

But after reading "lighght," one wonders if Saroyan, so roundly rebuked by Congress, doesn't have a few fans there himself. It is hard to see how people who opposed "lighght" could flip so completely over similar works like "sst" or "abm." ■

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The Diplomacy of Intervention and Extrication

by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

Knowledge is the object of our inquiry, and men do not think they know a thing till they have grasped the "why" of it (which is to grasp its primary cause). . . . In one sense, then, (1) that out of which a thing comes to be and which persists, is called "cause," e.g., the bronze of the statue, the silver of the bowl. . . . In another sense (2) the form or the archetype, i.e., the statement of the essence, and its genera, are called "causes". . . . Again (3) the primary source of the change or coming to rest, e.g., the man who gave advice is a cause, the father is cause of the child, and generally what makes of what is made and what causes change of what is changed. Again (4) in the sense of end or "that for the sake of which" a thing is done, e.g., health is the cause of walking about.

—Aristotle, *Physics*, Book II, chapter 3

No episode in our history, I believe, will baffle our posterity more than the Indochina war. Many, perhaps most, Americans already find it incredible that we ever considered our national interest so vitally engaged in Vietnam as to justify the death of 50,000 Americans and God knows how many Vietnamese in the longest war Americans have ever fought. Some find it even more incredible, after Vietnam has been burned into our souls, to watch a new administration a few years later confidently reenact the folly of Vietnam in Cambodia and Laos. "Can we draw no lessons even from the recent past?" Chester Cooper asks in his excellent book. "Must history always start on Inauguration Day?"

*The Lost Crusade** is a story of this mysterious episode told from the viewpoint of an intermittent participant. Cooper served with the Office of Strategic Services in the China-

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. teaches at City University of New York.

**The Lost Crusade* by Chester L. Cooper—Dodd, Mead, 559 pages, $12.00.

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Burma-India theater during World War II; he then moved on to the Central Intelligence Agency, a fact curiously omitted in the biographical note on the book jacket (after OSS, the jacket primly says, Cooper was "a specialist in that area of government"). Though his narrative begins with World War II (where he ably documents the now familiar point that if President Roosevelt had had his way Indochina would have been set up for independence and the world spared much bloodshed and agony), his personal involvement in Vietnam began with the Geneva conference of 1954. It continued through the founding session of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization later that year, the Laos conference in Geneva in 1961, and the Manila conference in 1966. In 1963 he joined McGeorge Bundy's National Security staff at the White House (I knew him then—quiet, unassuming, highly competent, more humor than at first one imagined) and became an assistant to Averell Harriman in 1966 when President Johnson charged, or went through the motions of charging, Harriman with organizing the quest for peace.

Cooper has cast himself for a very minor supporting role in his own story, most of the time providing local color or light comedy, though in the frustrations of the Wilson-Kosygin peace explorations of 1967 (well recounted) he assumes, for a moment, a larger part. He only occasionally tells us what he himself was thinking during these years, so we are never quite clear as to whether he has only recently renounced illusion or was a skeptic all along. I should add that this obscurity plainly derives not from any desire to escape accountability but rather from a natural diffidence that has evidently made him doubt that anyone would care much about the evolution of his own views.

The obscurity may derive too from the fact that Cooper is, by profession, a bureaucrat. He has spent his adult lifetime in the government service, except for his current tour of duty in the Institute for Defense Analyses (which is practically the same thing). The virtue of the professional civil servant lies in his readiness to execute policy, whatever (within constitutional limits) the policy may be. This is also his vice, especially in our own moralistic age; but no democratic government could work without this ingrained agnosticism in its professional service. Bureaucratic agnosticism is not, of course, total; the bureaucracy has a chronic preference for the accustomed over the novel policy, even for accustomed error as against novel truth. But the exercise of choosing among competing policies on their merits is not ordinarily part of the job.

Cooper is plainly a bureaucrat by profession and possibly by temperament too. Early on, for example, he tells us that "the first official inkling" of American wartime policy toward Indochina came in a State Department memorandum of February, 1944. This seems odd when we learn on the next page that President Roosevelt had told Anthony Eden in March, 1943, he did not want the French back. To the uninitiated this might constitute a moderately official inkling. But, in the true bureaucratic view, a trusteeship for Indochina was only a presidential policy in 1943; when the permanent government wrote a memorandum about it in 1944, then, evidently, it became serious policy.

The bureaucrat's perspective pervades the book. When President Johnson proposed an ambitious regional development program for Southeast Asia in his Johns Hopkins speech in 1965, Cooper complains that "the idea had not been discussed in advance with the experts and technicians and it took them by surprise." One can see Cooper's point here; but the President had a point, too. If he had consulted the experts and technicians, he probably would not have had a development plan; while by announcing a plan he might compel the experts to change their objective. It was in precisely this way that President

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Truman and Clark Clifford made the permanent government accept Point Four. On the other hand, the bureaucrat's-eye-view often yields treasures, as, for example, in Cooper's magnificent deadpan account of the administrative disarray wrought by President Johnson's addiction to secrecy, surprise, whim, and unpredictable favoritism. "It was difficult," Cooper recalls, "even for White House staffers to know at any given moment of play which players were in the game and which were not. Sometimes the players themselves could not tell if they were sitting on the bench or were in the scrimmage."

As a professional, Cooper probably went along with the Vietnam policy for a long time without particular approval or disapproval; this may be another reason why he is not too precise about the graph of his own dissent. Still, a bureaucrat, like everyone else, hath eyes, hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; when he is pricked, he too bleeds (in time). The cup of acquiescence can overflow; and the happy result in Cooper's case is this valuable and illuminating book.

It is important to understand what *The Lost Crusade* is not. It is not an account of the fighting in Vietnam; indeed, there is not a great deal in it about Vietnam at all. Nor is it an account of the political or economic impact of the war on American society. It is an account of certain diplomatic aspects of the American involvement. The first part shows the involvement deepening, as seen from Washington. This part is based somewhat on inside observation but rather more on research. The second, and more original, part is a study of the effort at extrication—that is, the peace negotiations of 1966-68—again as seen from Washington. The press has dealt with some of the episodes discussed here, but one never knew exactly how much one could believe. At last we have a detailed and authoritative record.

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note that the question of propriety has not been raised against Cooper. It was only half a dozen years ago when newspapers and other custodians of the public morals started a great clamor against *A Thousand Days* on the ground that it contained blasphemous revelations of sacred mysteries. I remember Sidney Hyman, a Washington writer with historical pretensions, telling one interviewer that the book represented the height (or was it the depth?) of historical irresponsibility. *The Lost Crusade*'s enthusiastic reception suggests that contemporary history (or eye-witness material preserved for future historians; as Cooper modestly, and accurately, says, "For now, the observer can only provide grist for the historian's mill") has finally come into its own as a respectable field of endeavor. Certainly no one can doubt that Cooper has performed a patriotic service in letting us know what our masters are really like.

He does this with even temper and good humor. His narrative is brisk and readable, though it lapses too easily into journalese—there are too many sporting similes and too many things come through "loud and clear." He does not at all have the gift for characterization that enriched and enlivened Townsend Hoopes' *Limits of Intervention*, but his canvas is considerably larger. He is *l'homme moyen sensuel*, not given to sensationalism or undue imagination but not easy to fool.

He makes his most useful contribution, I have suggested, in his analysis of the peace negotiations. "Prospects for negotiation," he says, were "dim in early 1966"—the North Vietnamese had no interest in "any terms other than the surrender of the United States"; but, even if Hanoi had by any chance been interested, the Johnson method was "plainly unsuitable. Where finely tooled instruments were required, we used a sledgehammer." Moreover, Washington itself was "unprepared for negotiations"; at a later point, when Arthur Goldberg proposed in the United Nations a bombing halt in exchange for assurances of de-escalation, "there were many in the Administration," Cooper writes, "who were noticeably relieved when 48 hours later both Hanoi and Peking unequivocally rejected Goldberg's proposals." In November, 1966, he thinks, "The Johnson Administration embarked on a sustained search for a way out"; but it is hard to see what the Administration decided then, beyond assigning the job to Harriman and Cooper. Cooper's own account of subsequent developments would justify a much less charitable description of the Johnson policy.

Thus he notes the American government's quite remarkable capacity to sabotage its own peace efforts. "The Administration, as of late 1966 and early 1967, was just not interested in negotiations to the extent necessary to prevent military action from interfering with or even negating diplomatic initiatives." This hardly sounds like a sustained search. But Cooper does not ascribe this recurrent military sabotage to calculation or conspiracy; "either of these would at least have had the merit of reflecting some thinking on the subject at high levels of the government. But there was none. . . . Instead, there was inertia, lethargy, and a reluctance 'to upset the President.' " He concludes "that there were those at the top level who had no interest in any new ideas, approaches, or initiatives with respect to negotiations. The current operative concept was 'Hit 'em again, but harder.' " When Clark Clifford pushed too hard for peace in the fall of 1968, President Johnson even struck his name from the distribution list for negotiation cables.

The Lost Crusade does not cast much light on the disagreement between Clifford and President Johnson over the source of the initiative for the partial bombing halt announced March 31, 1968. It does make clear, however, the purposeful role of the Saigon government in stalling the Paris negotiations just before the election. This leads him into a brilliant disquisition on the question of "leverage"—

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that is, the ability of a large state to control the policy and performance of a client state by threatening the cancellation of favors. Washington's only conclusive sanction, he points out, was total withdrawal; "and as the size of our forces, and therefore the extent of our commitment to our commitment, increased, this sanction became less and less credible. In short, our leverage declined as our involvement deepened."

Brooding over the whole text, of course, is the question of causality—"the 'why' of it," as Aristotle said. Cooper's approach to this question is discursive and random. "In retrospect," he writes, "it seems clear that our original commitment to Vietnam in 1954 was in response to what was then a felt national interest, but our involvement in scale and cost eventually outran any requirement we may have felt we had to preserve a non-Communist regime in Saigon." He attributes Eisenhower's commitment to "an American crusade to save the world from Communism." Kennedy, he thinks, saw the Russian support of national-liberation wars as "the only remaining obstacle to an East-West modus vivendi," and therefore took Vietnam as an opportunity to persuade Moscow that such a policy was dangerous and unpromising. Johnson was "too much the 'hawk' to do what had to be done to make peace, and too much the 'dove' to permit the kind of military action that would have risked a world war." As for Nixon, Cooper frankly cannot understand why he persists in repeating the errors of the past.

The Lost Crusade recapitulates the bewildering litany of explanations Presidents have given as to why we are in Vietnam. Cooper points out that these explanations were not "the same objective" in different words but "were different objectives, each calling for separate tactics and strategies" and concludes that the one legitimate motive was "to permit the Vietnamese to choose freely their future course." This is not really very convincing.

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Contributors include Hugh Sidey, Bill Moyers, David Hapgood, Morton Mintz, Nick Kotz, Russell Baker, James David Barber, James C. Thomson, Jr., James Boyd.

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Though Cooper calls this goal "at once both idealistic and realistic and therefore consistent with the traditions of American foreign policy," and though it would obviously be nice for the Vietnamese, and all other peoples, to choose freely their future course, he does not tell us why it was in the American national interest to intervene militarily to attain that goal in this particular country.

One wishes that he had attempted a better focused analysis of the causes of Vietnam. *The Lost Crusade* implicitly rejects one fashionable explanation—that the Indochina war was a manifestation of the quest of American capitalism for world hegemony. George Lichtheim wrote recently, "No one is ever going to claim that the United States got involved in Vietnam because it wanted the area's markets. The motivation was plainly political and strategic." But Lichtheim underestimated the fatuity of the American left, which makes precisely this claim. Cooper, in 559 pages of candid and disenchanted narrative, never once mentions any pressure by any American business interest to prosecute or intensify the Vietnam war. More sophisticated exponents of the economic thesis contend that, because defeat in Vietnam would have jeopardized American markets and investments throughout the Third World, economic interest therefore compelled Washington to a course of ruthless counter-revolution. Even in this form the thesis fails—first, because no one can demonstrate the mode by which the American business community induced the government to intervene in Vietnam; and secondly because two-thirds of American overseas investments and markets are in rich and industrialized nations and not at all in the poverty-stricken countries of the Third World.

If we take Aristotle's categories, the "material" cause of our involvement was, first, our overwhelming military power and, second, alas, the Kennedy-McNamara multiplication of "options" through the strategy of graduated deterrence—that is, the military capacity, carefully evolved after 1960, to respond to threat at the level of the threat. If we had retained the Eisenhower-Dulles "massive retaliation" defense posture, we would probably not have had the non-nuclear capacity to do much in Vietnam, and it seems unlikely that we would have dropped the bomb.

Aristotle himself was not clear as to the difference between his second and fourth categories—"formal" and "final" causes; they "are," he writes, "as it were, one." One can discern in the Vietnam case a number of causes proceeding from the pattern of our conceptions for the sake of which the intervention took place: the doctrinaire execution of a perfectly honorable belief in a universal peace system; the old missionary commitment to America's regenerative mission to suffering mankind; the liberal faith, fortified by the post-war experience of military occupation, in the American capacity to instruct and rebuild other nations; the quite real menace of Stalinist communism and the absolutist counter-ideology of anti-communism.

As for the "efficient" cause, "the primary source of the change," the specific pressure leading to intervention and escalation, this appears to have been our military establishment, created in the Second World War, nourished in the cold war and at every stage the decisive influence in stepping up the Indochina war—an influence operating not at the bidding of American capitalism, but as an independent force in its own right and finding in Presidents Johnson and Nixon complaisant instruments for its purpose. This surely was "what makes of what is made and what causes change of what is changed."

One wishes, I say, that Cooper had turned his attention to a more rigorous explanation of this most ghastly episode in our history. Still, we can be grateful for a lucid and illuminating account of the diplomacy of intervention and extrication. ■

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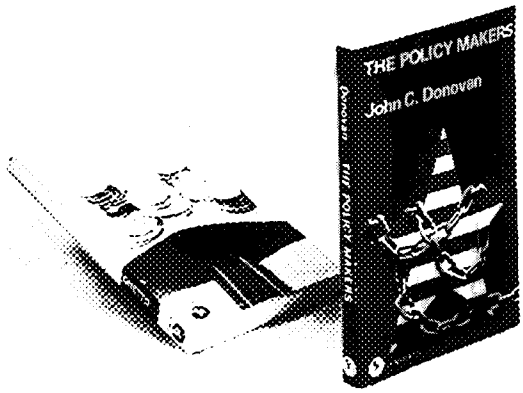

The Policy Makers

by John C. Donovan

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